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THE CHURCH AND CALVIN COLLEGE
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PAGES FROM THE PAST
Edited by Dr. George Stob

LETTERS

Dr. Henry Stob's article on "The Mind of Militancy" will appear in the June issue of the JOURNAL.

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Must the Church Lose Calvin College?

By Henry Verduin

The question of the propriety of church control Calvin College has often been before the Synod the Christian Reformed Church. For thirty years, om 1896 to 1926, consideration by no less than n synods led to the following conclusions: (1) at from an ideal point of view it would be proper transfer Calvin College to a society; (2) that, wever, from the point of view of principle it is t required; (3) that for practical reasons it better to continue Calvin College as a church ntrolled school.

In 1924, a committee, consisting of Rev. J. J. emenga, Prof. L. Berkhof, Rev. J. Manni, Rev. H. Kromminga, Mr. Wm. B. Eerdmans and Mr. hn Hekman, was appointed to study the matter oroughly. Its elaborate report in the synodical enda of 1926 is perhaps the best study of the atter that the church has produced. Its advice ainst transfer of Calvin College was adopted by nod with little dissent. That settled the matter r the next thirty years. The divine blessing upon lvin College ever since is witnessed by its phenomal development in every way.

When in 1956 the church faced the necessity of pansion of the facilities of Calvin College the l question of church control versus society conol was again raised with the result that a large mmittee, representing all sections of the denomition, was appointed and mandated by Synod to udy the question of expansion of Calvin College th many matters pertaining to it as well as e old question of proper control. We eagerly ait the report of this committee, which may ad to decisions that could largely determine the ture of both school and church.

It can be demonstrated that if Synod should ange the historical policy of the church regardg Calvin College and approve a plan to turn the llege over to a society it would commit the most agic blunder in the history of the denomination, blunder which would open the way for calamity far-reaching that we would perhaps never be le to overcome its effect. Its disastrous effect ould be fourfold.

I

The contemplated change of control of Calvin llege would be disastrous because it would decoy the present solid denominational backing of e college. Today there is splendid denominationde love and loyalty to the college, with prayer and devotion and financial support which are most heartening. The annual quota for Calvin College and Seminary is raised with such large measure of faithfulness that it brings distinction to the Christian Reformed denomination. It is the envy of many administrators of Christian colleges. This loyalty is rooted in the conviction which we have always held and fostered that the church has a divine right and calling to care for the education of its youth in order to preserve itself and to serve the Kingdom of God.

If the church should now declare that the support of the college is a matter of choice and not a matter of divine calling it would thereby give a mortal wound to the backing of the college. It is deluded optimism to think that we can destroy the present basis of Calvin College and build another in the place of it. It would be choosing a foundation of sand for one of rock. There is little hope that there would be a worthwhile response to a call for volunteers to sign up as members to form a society for the support of a Christian college.

The present generation is perhaps ignorant of the fact that in 1912 Synod appointed a broad committee to organize such a society, which committee two years later reported complete failure because the church was not ready for so radical a change. What hope is there of doing better in such an attempt today? The Synod of 1912 displayed rare wisdom when it stipulated conditions for its willingness to turn Calvin over to a society as soon as one should be established which would be able to support the college financially, and also to guarantee the Reformed and scientific character of the education which the church requires for its future ministers. Since those conditions could not be met, Synod safeguarded the school and the church forty-five years ago; Synod could for the same reason save both school and church today.

As to the fundamental question of the control of the college we can not just take for granted that it is firmly established that society control is undeniably the right method. Synod's committee of 1926 concluded (I translate): "In general, as the matter stands today, the Reformed have less objection to the church school than to the state school." Dr. Herman Bavinck in *Het Recht der Kerken en de Vrijheid der Wetenschap* (p. 31) says (I translate): "Thereto again [that is to the establishing of a college] the right and competence of the church may not be denied. If the churches for years, not

from choice but of necessity, have cared for the literary and college training of its future ministers, then it is inconceivable why it must withdraw from the same, as soon as a society establishes a college. The church need not yield to a society in such a case. And if they consider furthermore the existence and continuance of such a society to be uncertain, and, choosing the certain for the uncertain, continue with the training, they are not to be blamed. They certainly must watch lest the education of their future ministers fail through the collapse or incompetence of such a society school."

The same Dr. H. Bavinck remarked to one of our men studying at Amsterdam in about 1915 (I translate): "What is the matter with you people in America, talking about separating your college from the church?" And Dr. Abraham Kuyper expressed himself thus in *De Heraut*, No. 1109 (I translate): "The instituted church can also establish a university, form a faculty, erect a seminary. And that not at all for theologians but for each and all science."

Since 1843 the Calvinistic Free Church of Scotland has maintained its colleges at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. And in our country the Reformed and Presbyterian churches maintain more than a hundred colleges. Let us not think that we may ride the principle of the society school as if our Reformed soundness depended on it.

The fact that the society school can be made to work on the local level in day schools, high schools, and small colleges does not demonstrate that it can be made to work on a denominational level. Proximity appeal carries such small schools. The same appeal is an important factor in the case of the Free University of Amsterdam. A large school lacks sufficiently widespread proximity appeal to be able to operate and to flourish on the society level. Church control is certainly justifiable when the very life of the college is dependent on it. We must look before we leap. Tampering with the present basis of Calvin College may do irreparable harm.

II

Abandonment of Calvin College to a society would be disastrous for the zeal of the Christian Reformed Church to fulfil its mandate to promote the truth of God. Let us examine three pertinent passages of Scripture regarding this mandate of the church.

Matthew 28:19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This great commission contains two commands. The first is to preach the gospel to all nations an presents the primary task of the church. Th second is an addition which teaches the secondar task of the church. It covers the application the teachings of Christ in all their depth and fulnes It shows that the church must be interested in mo than just saving those to whom it preaches. must be interested in making them Christians the fullest sense of the word. It must promo observance of all the teachings of Christ. Th implies responsibility in the whole field of Christi teaching, thinking, living, and culture.

There are those who say that distinction mu here be made between the church as an institu and as an organism. Against this, two observ tions are in order. First, that whatever the may be to such distinction, the pertinent fact he is that the great commission does not make Secondly, it must be realized that the church as organism functions through the church as an ins tute in the first place. It is an institute for t sole purpose of functioning in the world. One the most prominent ways in which the chur functions is in confessing and teaching and prop gating the truth. It may do so in the broade sense in the most consistent, comprehensive, a effective way. It is too narrow an understandi of the great commission to hold that, because t primary task of the church is to preach the gosp it therefore may not own and operate a colle Full obedience to the great commission calls t just what the Christian Reformed Church is doi through Calvin College. There is basis here t our mandate to do it.

II Timothy 1:13, 14: "Hold the pattern of sou words which thou hast heard from me, in fa and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thi which was committed unto thee guard through Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us." The pertin thought for us here is that the church is guardian of sound words which it holds as a posit. That is nothing less than all Christian tr and all its implications with Christ himself as center. This responsibility has ever led the chu to realize that it has to do more than develop t ology. That is because the assault on God's tr is much broader than the field of theology. T battle is not even most dangerous in the field theology, which is largely a field for adults mature minds; but the battle has always been m dangerous in the field of education in general youth. The warfare of the church in educat has been for faith and conviction in the hearts a minds of its youth.

This has been so well understood by the churc that in our country no less than five hundred nominational colleges have been brought into bei Unless the church controls the education of

uth it cannot properly guard this precious deposit sound words divinely committed to it. The urch is responsible to God who gave it this ardianship. The thought of turning Calvin llege over to a society confronts the church with temptation to relax in maintaining this guardianip in the education of its youth.

I Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou ayest know how men ought to behave themselves the house of God, which is the church of the ing God, the pillar and ground of the truth." llar and ground both denote strength, firmness d permanence. The truth here referred to has do with the behavior of men in the church. The uth is their concern. And truth is not only theology t truth in every sphere since all truth is one in sus Christ who himself is the truth. This means at men in the church must promote and defend the uth in every sphere, in art and science and all lds of learning. The owning and operating of lleges by the churches is in harmony with the blical teaching that the church is the pillar and ound of the truth. Although Christians have omoted the truth in education by means of cieties, this passage does present basic validaon of church-controlled educational institutions general learning. This text may even be used give comfort to those who believe in specifically rochial schools. In any case the church must insistent on really being the pillar and ground the truth, the whole truth of God.

III

The proposed change of control of Calvin College ould be disastrous for the school itself. It is ident that as soon as the church should teach that pport of Calvin College is not a matter of divine lling but of choice, the school would quickly lose s place in the hearts of Christian Reformed people. enomination-wide interest would shrink to such extent that Calvin would have to be reduced to mere fraction of its present size. Even then it ould have to seek outside support. With outside pport would come outside influence and with tside influence would eventually come outside ntrol.

The history of denominational colleges shows at when denominational backing fails the Chrisan character of the college declines and finally sappears. For us the loss of the Christian and eformed character of Calvin College would be e loss of the college. As soon as a society takes ver, the church loses control. The church can give bstantial promise of keeping the teaching in a llege sound but no other agency can. This is ot the fantasy of black pessimism; it is the soberg lesson of the history of hundreds of denominational colleges which have lost the love and loyalty of the churches which founded them. Dr. Herman Bavinck says in *Theologische School en Vrije Universiteit* (p. 49) (I translate): "For a Reformed person the churches always stand in higher rank than the most excellent society. The churches offer stronger assurance of the continuance of training, of Reformed and scientific character of training, of supervision of teaching, of supply of financial needs than can the most excellently organized society. And such a society shall always have to fall back on the churches for all these eventually."

Before such falling back, if indeed it were possible, could take place, the school would have suffered irreparably as to its financial and doctrinal soundness. Separation of Calvin from the love and loyalty, the prayers and gifts of the church which it now enjoys, would be the fateful beginning of the end for the college.

IV

The proposed change of control of Calvin College would be disastrous also for the Christian Reformed Church. This is so because as education goes so goes the church. The change would cut down the capacity of Calvin College to such an extent that a large number of its students could not continue in its halls. A host of such students would have to get their education in non-Christian schools. There they would be exposed to teaching that is hostile to our Reformed faith and to Christianity as well. They would tend to become bewildered and filled with doubt and unbelief. They would lose all zeal for Calvinism, we may be sure. Yet most of such educated people would remain in the church and would exert their influence in the coming generations. As educated people they would even be likely to become officers in the churches. Thus infiltration of modernism into the churches would be inevitable. If we look around us we can see this happening in churches on every side.

Before Calvin College began to train young people entering the professions, it was very common that those who became doctors or dentists or lawyers or engineers lost their loyalty to the Christian Reformed Church or even to Christianity itself. Since Calvin College has given training to young people entering the professions, the church has had great numbers of professional people who are among its most loyal members and are a great asset to it in its fight to remain truly Reformed. They are a great blessing wherever they are throughout the broad expanse of the denomination. Consider the promise for the future in the more than seventeen hundred young people being educated at Calvin College today to function as Reformed Christians in various walks of life. This brings into focus the

fact that Calvin College is the church's hope of remaining orthodox. That is because the educated members of the church greatly influence the course of its development. In this light the continued loyal support of Calvin College can be seen as exalted service for the Kingdom of God and for its King.

It takes no specially inspired wisdom to see the danger that threatens in the renewed agitation to separate the college from the church. In that direction lies irretrievable loss. We must retain church control of Calvin to save the school and its orthodox character; we must save the school to save the church; we must save both school and church for the sake of the Kingdom of God. That is the supreme issue which confronts us today. May vision not be lacking to see that relinquishing Calvin College certainly may prove to be the beginning of the end not only for the school but for the orthodoxy of the Christian Reformed Church as well.

LOUIS BERKHOF 1874 - 1957

In the death of the Rev. Louis Berkhof, Professor emeritus of Systematic Theology and President emeritus of Calvin Seminary, the learned world lost an impressive scholar, the Reformed community an authoritative teacher, the Christian Reformed Church a revered and trusted leader, and his colleagues and associates an understanding and faithful friend.

The Editors and Publishers of the *Journal* deeply mourn his passing but rejoice in knowing that he has gone to be forever with the Lord of Life.

To the sorrowing widow and children we extend our heartfelt condolences.

The Church and Calvin College

By George Stob

Two articles have now appeared in *The Reformed Journal* which take position for the continued maintenance and operation of Calvin College by the Christian Reformed Church. The first article, entitled: "Church Control of Calvin College," was written by Dr. John Bratt, Professor of Bible at Calvin College, and appeared in the February 1957 issue of the *Journal*. The second article, by Rev. Henry Verduin, minister of the Second Church at Pella, Iowa, entitled: "Must the Church Lose Calvin College?" appears in this issue.

This problem has been before us, asking for clear and convincing analysis and answer, ever since the church entered into the business of college education. It is now acutely before us because of impending moves to large expansion of Calvin College, and Synod's concern to take the basic issue under careful scrutiny before moving on toward another stage in the history of church-school relationships. For that reason I should like to examine the arguments which are advanced in the two above-mentioned attempts to defend the right of the church to own and operate a college. And I should like also to give a brief summary statement of considerations that argue for the opposite position.

Dr. John Bratt offers four arguments for the judgment that the church ought to retain control of Calvin College: (1) "It violates no princi of Scripture." (2) "It affords a fair range academic freedom." (3) "It serves to unify denomination." (4) "It has proven to be eminen satisfactory." (Cf. *The Reformed Journal*, F ruary 1957, pp. 17ff).

The Rev. Henry Verduin urges that Calvin kept a church school, and contends that if it surrendered to a Christian Society, the "disastr effect would be fourfold" — (1) "It would dest the present solid denominational backing of college." (2) "It would be disastrous for zeal of the Christian Reformed Church to fulfil mandate to promote the truth of God." (3) would be disastrous for the school itself," beca "the school would quickly lose its place in the hea of Christian Reformed people." (4) "It would disastrous for the church, because as educat goes so goes the church."

Is There Scriptural Warrant?

Both Dr. Bratt and Rev. Verduin are cert that church ownership and operation of a coll is a right that is based on Scripture. Both find right established especially by the charge giv by Jesus in the great commission: "teaching th to observe all things whatsoever I have comman you." And both commit the same error — t

reading into the word "teaching" the exercise education in the broad cultural sense. Dr. Bratt eaks of this "teaching" as the church's "educative signment . . . to propagate Calvinism," and the urch's calling, among other things, to give to abryonic doctors, nurses, lawyers, laboratory chnicians, teachers "training in the general revetion fields on the basis of the interpretation of e Word of God." Rev. Verduin finds in Christ's arge the implied "responsibility in the whole field Christian teaching, thinking, living, and culture." ese are very broad assertions, but they are no ore than that. They can scarcely be sustained by e meaning of the New Testament word "teaching," the Scripture witness to the unique character of e church's teaching task.

It is obvious from the context in which Jesus eaks, as well as from the context of the whole ew Testament, that the church's duty of "teachg" has a limited and specific reference. It is lated immediately to the preaching of the gospel, d is concerned with the shaping of those who are n by the gospel into loyal and obedient disciples Christ. Jesus requires that men should know at is involved in a right relationship to Him as eir Savior and Lord, and for that reason charges at they should be taught "to observe all things atsoever I commanded you." This is a far cry om saying that the apostles, and the church after em, must teach chemistry, law, science, engineerg, typing, basketball, and physiology. And it still a far cry from saying that the church must plore and teach the subject matter of "general velation." And it is a far cry from saying that e church is responsible for "the whole field of ristian teaching, thinking, living, and culture."

It may be replied that the intention is only that e church should teach the broad principles of ristian living and thinking. If that were so, it uld readily be granted that such broad Christian aching is quite properly implied in the charge teach men to observe the commands of Christ. t if that is what is meant, why should the church ve need of a college for the performance of this rt of its task? Is the ministry, or are the eaching and teaching agencies of the church adequate; or are they in actual fact without real mpetence to teach the meaning of faithful and edient Christian discipleship? It would seem is is belied by what is taught in Scripture conrning the gifts and competences of the Christian hurch, to which Christ gave "apostles . . . prophs . . . evangelists . . . pastors and teachers; for e perfecting of the saints, unto the work of inistering, unto the building up of the body of hrist: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, d of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). If the church uses a broad cultural educational agency for teaching doctors, nurses, engineers, et al. how to live and think as Christians, it can mean only that the church is not faithfully discharging her own teaching task, and is in fact placing this part of her charge into the hands of a foreign agency which deals with only a small percentage of her membership.

The church has her own unique and profoundly important teaching task, and no matter how closely this is related to the teaching function carried on by a Christian college, the two are not the same and the exercise is not an interchangeable one. This is the importance of Dr. Kuyper's strong insistence on the principle of "sphere sovereignty." The church has a large enough task to do when she is called to preach the gospel and teach the principles and commands of Christian discipleship. And she has qualification for this task. But she has neither time nor energy to spare for, nor the competence to engage in, the teaching of chemistry, etc., even if it be "chemistry, etc. in the light of Christianity." This is the function to which the school is called, and for which the school — thanks to Christian men who have been rightly discipled by the church — has the competence. And in her performance of this task the school should not permit any domination or interference by the church, anymore than the church should permit such domination or interference of her own life and task by the State or the school.

Abraham Kuyper was indeed absolutely insistent on this independence of the spheres, and he allowed for no "extenuations of it." Though Kuyper allowed that because of the "stress of circumstances" the State should for a time continue to support education, he counted this an abnormal situation, and consented to it "on the condition that all effort be pointed in the direction of liberation, and 'the sovereignty in its own sphere' be again implemented by education [*wetenschap*] as her ideal" (*Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring*, p. 25). Take note further of what Kuyper says about the relation of education and the church. "Education [*wetenschap*] also constitutes a life-sphere of her own, in which truth is sovereign, and under no circumstances may an infringement or violation of her uniqueness be permitted. To do that would not only dishonor education, but it would be sin before God." Somewhat later in the same oration: "It must be maintained tooth and nail that the church of Christ may never impose her superior authority [*overhoogheid*] upon education. Taking the very real risk that she herself may suffer injury from education [*wetenschap*], the church must rather herself insist that

education, not ever becoming servile, must maintain her proper sovereignty in her own sphere and live by the grace of God" (*Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23).

Dr. Bratt observes that "although the spheres can and should be differentiated, they cannot and should not be isolated the one from the other." That is true. And it is true, too, that there is an intimate relation "between the spheres of Church and Education." But when on the ground of this Dr. Bratt suggests that therefore the church may exercise herself in general education, he is no longer simply calling attention to a qualifying consideration in connection with the principle of "sphere sovereignty." He is rather dismissing the principle. One may be led to do so. But then it ought to be recognized that this is no longer consistent with Kuyper's statement of the principle. And good grounds ought to be given for the judgment that church and education are not only interrelated, but that, because they are, the church may actually take over the business of education by conducting a college.

Question of Academic Freedom

Dr. Bratt further holds that the church ought to continue to own and operate Calvin College because "ecclesiastical control affords a fair range of academic freedom."

Whether church control does actually afford a fair range of academic freedom or not is in a given instance an empirical question that would have to be answered by reference to empirical data. The only empirical data advanced to show that Calvin College does have academic freedom is the information that there are "variant views among us on Ussher's Chronology and the age of the earth," and "divergencies of viewpoint with respect to integration and segregation of racial minority groups." We are hard put to it, indeed, if we must evidence academic freedom by referring to "Ussher's Chronology," abandoned long ago by our Reformed kin in the Netherlands, or by suggesting that Calvin professors are at liberty to ignore sinful social prejudices and think and speak in Christian terms about racial integration and segregation.

Apart from what an empirical inquiry might disclose, there is the question of the longer lesson of history and the more fundamental lesson of strict propriety. On the matter of the longer lesson of history, it is evident that church control of education is not the sort of thing that has given assurance of "a fair range of academic freedom." Dr. Bratt acknowledges that "the term 'church-school' usually connotes narrow confines of learning and scrupulously close surveillance of the classroom. It savors of curtailment and restriction and severe limitations. The picture drawn is that of impatient scholarship, eager to explore the unknown reache but held back by the suspicious look or the forbi ding frown of the church . . . . The church is co servative and hidebound and steeped in tradition The documentation for this is said to be found the Medieval Church. It should be added th documentation could be found as well in the Pr testant Church. For Protestant churches, tc can and have been known to fall into the kind traditionalism and institutionalism that is concern to set up defense against the new light that breal from honest and objective inquiry and researc

Apart from the longer lesson of history, the is the lesson of strict propriety. Education, whi can develop according to its genius and right perform its function through a scholarship that free from institutional concerns, must therefo avoid subjection to church or any other kind of co trol. This was Kuyper's insistence, as is clear fro what has been quoted above. Dr. Bratt is equal concerned about this. A grave peril to any scho he says, is to be without money for its own suppor In that case, contributions would have to be soug from those who could pay. And then, "munifice donors would invariably be named to the boa of trustees and would control the institution." Th would mean that "subscription to a certain politic philosophy and the holding of certain econom views would be one of the tests of professorsh with the dismal alternative of having the inflow funds cut off at the source."

In view of that peril, it seems strange that o should be ready, for financial reasons, to surrend Calvin College to the control of the church. F it is here that ecclesiastical appointees becor members of the Board of Trustees and "contr the institution." Does this exclude the possibili that subscription to a certain political philosop and the holding of certain economic views might "one of the tests of professorship"?

Servant of Denominational Unity?

Another argument is that Calvin College, und ecclesiastical control, serves to unify the denomin tion, since the "College is one of the cohesive facto in the Christian Reformed Church."

Granting for the moment that it is true, wh validity does this have for church control of Calv College? None whatsoever, it seems. A school maintained and operated for educational purpos not for the sake of achieving ecclesiastical en even if that end be so noble as that of cultivati the unity of an ecclesiastical community. A number of things might be thought to be devic which might promote ecclesiastical unity. T church might set up a political organization to whi everybody might be expected to give his support a

or which every minister might be called upon to pray. This might, conceivably, promote some kind of ecclesiastical unity, too. But apart from the fact that the unity thus promoted might be a questionable kind, this would not be good reason for the church's engagement in matters of political organization and promotion.

It is, further, a far from creditable thing to say that we ought to maintain Calvin College because church control of it serves to unify the denomination. It is an odd circumstance that we should look for unity through an agency that stands outside of the church and whose task is distinct from that of the church. Church unity is an important thing, but it is achieved through the peculiar gifts and treasures which Christ has given to His Church. We are united in commitment to the same Lord, the same Word of God, the same great tradition of faith, and are made one in and by the one Spirit of God — and that is true notwithstanding the many diversities that may exist among us. Church unity is not simply organizational, formalistic, based on common performance of a given program of action. Church unity is spiritual, based on spiritual considerations, and promoted by spiritual qualities and actions. Paul exhorts us to give diligence to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." There is no suggestion that he proposes we do so by uniting in a common non-ecclesiastical effort. Unity is to be sought within the Church of Christ, within the framework of her proper life and faith and service. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." It seems peculiar, to say the least, to put in the same category a statement that "there is one Calvin College" for the unity of the Christian Reformed Church.

Apart from this, it is very much a question whether Calvin College is as much the unifying agent as it is assumed to be. Calvin College is not as common an interest or as uniting a common bond as might be supposed. Calvin looms up very large in the minds of those who occupy a place on its campus, and it appears to them to take up a very large place in the heart and life of the church. But it does not loom equally large in the hearts and minds of the general membership of the church. There are many whose acquaintance with it is vague and distant, and many more for whom it does not constitute any vital interest. That is true notwithstanding the contributions that are made by "every family in the denomination." There are many people who pay their Calvin College quotas, along with others, without any consciousness of or concern for Calvin College. They are making their contribution to their local church, and to the denomination of which they are a part. The imposed denominational quotas make it possible for people to pay for Calvin College without knowing it or giving thought to it. One might deplore the fact that "our people" are so little acquainted with "their school." But since it is not a valid ecclesiastical exercise, but an educational enterprise for the benefit of a few, that is unavoidable. Happily, our denominational unity does not depend on the measure and quality of acquaintance with and interest in Calvin College. It depends rather on common participation in the life and task of the church which belongs to all her members.

It might even be said that Calvin College might tend to be more of a divisive factor in the life of the Christian Reformed Church than a unifying factor. Many of the ecclesiastical tensions throughout the years of the church have centered about developments and situations existing at Calvin College. The church community has often been sharply divided, because it found in Calvin College a bone of contention with respect to such matters as: rules governing worldly amusements, interpretation of the antithesis, concept of educational philosophy, appointment of professors, quality and emphases in students' social and cultural activities, and suspected or reported aberrations in the teaching of the professors. Calvin College may be a divisive factor in some part also because it tends, in the eyes of those who live in outlying sections, to give to Grand Rapids and environs a kind of favor in the church's maternal care. And there is now a division in the Christian Reformed Church community between those who hold to church ownership and control and those who do not. And as long as Calvin continues as a church school, this will continue to be a point at issue, with the contention sharpening in the measure that the needs and interests of other sections of the church seem to be sacrificed to Calvin.

The argument of "unity" is, I fear, without reasonable supporting evidence, and otherwise not clearly valid.

Argument of Safety or Sorrow

This is the argument that the distinctive and essential well-being of the Christian Reformed Church has been secured in very large measure, if not predominantly, through the services of Calvin College; and that to release Calvin from church control would be disastrous for the church. The argument has also another twist. It is suggested that if Calvin were released from church ownership and control and left to the care of a Christian

Society, it would run to rack and ruin not only financially but also in respect of the faith.

These are some of the most strongly advanced arguments for continuing church ownership and control. And of all arguments, these do least credit to the church and most of all point up the evil of church dependence on the college and college dependence on the church. For if it be thought that not only the well-being but the very existence and orthodoxy of the Christian Reformed Church depend on Calvin College, it might be confessed that we are not what the Church of Christ ought to be. For the strength of the church and her power of preservation are found in her Lord, in the Word, and Spirit given to her, and in the offices and agencies with which Christ supplied her. When the church depends for her well-being on an institution foreign to herself and her offices, it is time to be alarmed. Christ did not build the security of His Church on the rock that might be provided by a liberal arts college. The rock was her allegiance to Himself and her profession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. It has been well said by another, commenting on this question, that "it is on Peter the Confessor of Jesus as the Christ, not on Peter the Professor of Chemistry-in-the-light-of-Christianity, that Christ built and still builds His Church," and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

The reverse side of the argument — namely, that the well-being of the college depends on church control — also reflects unfavorably upon the church. The fear that if the college were turned over to a society there would not be enough commitment to the cause of Christian education, and the fear that a society-owned college would lose its faith, is a fear born out of complete lack of confidence in the members of the Christian Reformed Church. Is the Christian Reformed Church so weak in her witness and in her influence over her members that she cannot send them out to Kingdom tasks with the confidence that they will be committed and keep the faith of their commitment? This judgment — that the security and well-being of the college depends on church control — is an argument worthy only of the Roman Catholic Church, which regards her membership as perpetually immature and continually dependent on the church and her offices.

And yet, this is what we are told in these arguments for continued church control of Calvin College. Dr. Bratt finds that "amid the apostatizing that has marked our country religiously," the Christian Reformed Church has "maintained a firm hold on the fundamentals of the faith." One of the major factors, he asserts, "is the supervision and surveillance that the church has exercised with respect to its major liberal arts institution." The church has protected herself against the colleg professors. "Deviation is usually hatched in t scholar's study, from whence it is carried into t classroom. Conscientious church control . . . h served to prevent such meandering from the faith Is it really true that Calvin College professo must be kept under such tutelage?

Rev. Henry Verduin has somewhat the same kin of dire predictions as to what will happen if Calv is separated from the church. He thinks it wou be "the most tragic blunder in the history of o denomination, a blunder which would open t way for calamity so far-reaching that we wou perhaps never be able to overcome its effect To surrender Calvin, says Verduin, "would disastrous for the zeal of our church to fulfill i mandate to promote the truth of God." "Unle the church controls the education of its youth cannot properly guard this precious deposit of sou words divinely committed to it." In the directi of separation "lies irretrievable loss." "We mu retain church control of Calvin to save our scho and its orthodox character; we must save o school to save our church; we must save bo school and church for the sake of the Kingdom God. That is the supreme issue which confron us today."

Safety or sorrow? is thus equated with the que tion of church ownership and control of Calv College or not. This argument has strong em tional appeal. But it implies a low view of t church, and devalues the power and blessing th Christ gave to His Church for the sake of her ov preservation and for the sake of preparing h children for vital Kingdom service. If there any merit to this argument, then our problem not what to do without educational institutio The problem is then more urgent — it is t problem of what shall be done about the chur But I suspect the argument is based on strong subjective alarms which are not quite found The Christian Reformed Church will not on survive, but will prosper if she is released fr inordinate preoccupation with a non-ecclesiasti enterprise. And Calvin College, when it is the ca of a responsible society of Christian people, wh allegiance has been won to the cause, will n collapse. The people who have built up an envia system of grade and secondary Christian scho throughout our country are a people vital a committed enough to keep and maintain a sc and respectable Christian college.

Let the College Be Independent

There are several considerations which urge t separation of Calvin College from church owners and control, mainly the following:

(1) It is not the business of the church to nduct an institution for general liberal arts and ientific education. The church's basic and com- ete charge is to preach the gospel and minister the spiritual growth of those who through the spel have come to be Christ's. The church can afford, nor has she the right, to spend time and ergy and substance for carrying out a major rogram of action which is non-ecclesiastical, and erefore not a part of her essential and definitive sk. By the same token, the school, as a kingdom stitution within human society, has a calling culiar to herself and her competence, and the hool must be left free to develop her character d discharge her task without control by and terference from another institution or sphere of tivity.

(2) The church does not have either the legal the moral right to impose upon her membership e requirement to support and maintain a non- clesiastical enterprise, or in any way lay the rden of such an enterprise upon the church. his, however, is what the church does when she erself owns and operates a college for general lucation.

(3) The church's ownership and operation of alvin College is prejudicial to other, privately itiated and supported, educational efforts. Calvin ght to exist and function not by preferred synod- al legislation, but, as all other schools do, by romotion of her own cause and solicitation of luntary gifts.

(4) Church ownership of Calvin has not been nd is not now to the best interests of either the llege or the church. Church interference in alvin's affairs makes it impossible for Calvin to nduct education with independence and accord- g to her genius. Church preoccupation with alvin makes of a non-ecclesiastical enterprise a ajor and inordinately large part of our ecclesias- cal effort.

(5) With large-scale expansion in prospect, the urch must now seriously consider the call to ithdraw from her paternalistic involvement in eneral education, rather than contemplate a large nd somewhat blind leap forward into increasing nd indefinitely continuing involvement in what is ot the church's calling. This is best for Calvin, too. Calvin should be independent, able to work out her destiny according to her peculiar nature and calling.

(6) Ownership and administration of a college by an agency other than the church is not necessarily impracticable. There has never been any serious endeavor to release Calvin from church control and set her up as an independent kingdom enterprise. It is time that the church, instead of continuing simply to defend her "right" to maintain a college, should set in motion a program that will develop the "more correct principle" of private initiative.

* * * * *

The above is a brief and somewhat sparse statement of the position that is taken by the Minority of a Synodical Study Committee appointed to inquire into the problem of ecclesiastical ownership and control of Calvin College. Its major recommendation, consistent with this position, is that the church takes steps ultimately to relinquish ownership and control of Calvin College. It is proposed that to that end the church appoint a competent Board of Administration, whose members are chosen not on the basis of Classical representation but on the basis of competence in educational administration, and with due regard to sectional representation. The administration of Calvin College is to be delegated to this Board, whose duty it would be to administer the college according to her present and expanding needs, and also progressively to develop a solid administrative and financial structure to undergird the institution. The church would retain ownership, and stand guarantor of the continuing stable existence of the college, until such time as she is assured that a solid administrative and financial structure has been built to sustain Calvin as an independent institution.

In any event, the church, which has consistently professed that education is not properly her business, ought to make an attempt that is in keeping with that profession. Continuing ownership and control of Calvin College will not remove the problem of church-school relationship. In the coming years the problem can become only more complicated and acute. It is well for the church seriously to face and make a determined effort to resolve this problem now.

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Is Separate Christian Organization Mandatory?

By Lester DeKoster

No one needs reminding that the question of separate Christian organization, especially in Labor, is a live issue among us. Some weeks ago the Editor of *De Wachter* discussed the position enunciated by Professor H. E. Runner on this question, and invited others to participate in further discussion. What follows is a reworking of a Calvin College Homecoming Day lecture devoted to that end.

My purpose must be clearly understood. I am not addressing myself to the desirability, or feasibility, of separate Christian organizations. I am here trying *only to examine* the *cogency* of the several forms of argument advanced to demonstrate that *separate Christian organization is mandatory* for the Reformed believer.

The Question

The nub of the discussion centering on separate versus "neutral" organizations is *not,* in fact, this question: May there be, or is it desirable to have, separate Christian organization in labor, in politics, and in other spheres? Were this the question, there would be evident among us differences of emphasis and variations in practice, but withal a tolerant willingness to let each go the way his conscience leads.

The question in dispute, however, is more nearly this: Is membership in separate Christian organizations *mandatory* for the Reformed believer, or, conversely, is membership in neutral organizations incompatible with loyalty to the Reformed faith?

Three kinds of argument may be distinguished among those employed to give an affirmative answer to this question.

1. The Argument from Scripture

Various texts are cited, especially II Corinthians 6:14-18 ("Be ye not unequally yoked . . .") to give footing to a direct inference from the Bible that the Christian may not join neutral organizations and therefore must join only Christian organizations.

Synod's hesitancy, in the face of repeated requests, to pronounce unequivocally for mandatory membership in Christian separate labor organizations, and its refusal to declare membership in neutral unions incompatible with Reformed profession, are in themselves *prima facie* evidence that the argume from Scripture is not self-evident. I will not t therefore, to examine each of the texts commor cited. This is the less necessary in that thorou discussion of them is projected for a forthcomi issue of this journal, from another hand.

Because, however, so much is made of II Cor thians 6:14-18, it may be discussed as illustrati of all the others. In his *Commentary* on this te Calvin clearly does not construe it as forbidding association with unbelievers in common organi tion. Rather, he writes, "we should have no fello ship with them *in their pollutions,*" that is, " works, in which Christians cannot lawfully ha fellowship." And this point of view is echoed the report of the Committee on Secret Societies the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the 1 General Assembly of that body: "A rather wi spread popular interpretation of this passage Cor. 6:14-18) is that it forbids the association believers in any kind of organization. It is argu that when believers and unbelievers are members the same organization, they are 'yoked togethe and precisely that is forbidden. The fallacy this interpretation is obvious. The text mal it perfectly clear that the apostle is here speaki not of any and every kind of organization, b specifically of religious association. Besides, Scr ture teaches by implication, if not explicitly, th it is permissible in certain instances for believ to be members of the same organization w unbelievers."

And these sentiments do but develop the thoug Calvin expressed in a letter to Bullinger of M 7, 1549: "Your example does not, therefore, weigh with me that I should pronounce all allian whatever with the wicked to be unlawful. F I reflect that Abraham was not hindered by a scruples from making a covenant with Abimele Isaac, David, and others did the same, and receiv neither reproof nor punishment."

Thus, too, the reader himself will recall th Daniel served his pagan ruler well, as did Jose to name no others, without rebuke — indeed in t Providence of God.

I conclude, then, inasmuch as Synod has not foun as Calvin did not, and as other competent Reform

holars have not, that Scripture forbids Christian embership in non-Christian organizations, the gument for mandatory Christian organizations is t immediately derived from the Bible.

2. The Practical Argument

The second class of argument against Christian embership in organizations is the practical argument, namely, that the neutral organization engages demonstrably sinful practices and thus obliges s members to sin or involves them in responsibility r sin. Such practices are commonly instanced Sunday meetings, coercive use of the strike, and nstitutional provisions which violate the conience, among others.

That these are serious concerns, Synod explicitly cognized in its 1948 enactments relative to corrate responsibility. These obliged the Christian separate himself from those associations which d him into, or made him corporately responsible r, sinful acts. Synod has not seen in these practical arguments, however, grounds for general gislation against membership in neutral organizaons, or grounds for mandatory membership in hristian organizations.

The following considerations bear upon these ractical aspects of the question of separate organation:

(a) The term *membership* is itself flexible and mbiguous, especially when related to the idea of *esponsibility*. Even the strongest advocates of andatory separate organization have found it ecessary to distinguish between "loose" or "gen-ral" and "strict" forms of association. We are all, a real sense, "members" by way of indirect nancial support of countless of those organizations ith which any complex society is honey-combed. race, for example, what institutions and practices ne voluntarily supports (and so far forth endorses) ll over the world when he buys a motorcar.

What, then, is *membership?* Is it financial upport? Is it endorsement by silence? Is it only he taking of a pledge of allegiance? Is citizenhip a kind of membership in the body politic, *oluntarily* assumed (as Locke taught) when the itizen comes of age and chooses to vote in and ccept the benefits of civil polity? How is the hristian citizen related in terms of responsibility o the deeds of a party in power whose acts he annot conscience? Does membership in a golf lub make the Christian responsible for its being pen on Sunday, even after he has protested and hough he never plays on that day himself? Does uying a weekday baseball ticket involve one in oluntary responsibility for Sunday games? In hort, the terms *membership* and *responsibility* are hameleon in significance, and unless carefully defined they complicate any judgment based on organizational practices.

(b) Practice arises out of principle, not principle out of practice, and therefore practice can form no stable ground for general principles. Suppose, for example, membership in a neutral organization were denied on general principles because the organization held meetings on Sunday. And, then, suppose that the organization discontinued Sunday meetings, or specifically legislated in its By-laws (as have several Grand Rapids AFL-CIO locals) against Sunday meetings. The general condemnation would be thus robbed of its practical footing, and hang, as it were, in the air.

In *The Banner* of Sept. 10, 1954, the Reverend Mr. Edward Heerema describes how the Constitution of the International Typographer's Union was altered significantly. A provision in the 1953 edition which placed duty to the Union above duties to God and country was changed in the 1954 edition to place duty to God and country explicitly above those due the Union. Should some general principles have been founded on the earlier Constitution, the later one would have bereft these of their substance.

In short, the Christian must strive against sinful practice wherever he finds it, and he may be obliged to leave some organizations because his striving is unsuccessful; but practical considerations offer no secure basis for blanket principial condemnation, nor for mandatory membership in other organizations.

(c) There is, lastly, the simple fact that in practice — and this is the sole area under discussion here — the Christian is never faced with a choice between the wholly sinful and wholly sinless organization. Were he obliged, on practical grounds, to withhold his membership until a sinless association appeared, he would seek in vain for one to join. His struggle with the practical problems created by sin begins and continues within his own life, and neither the Christian nor his cultural creations achieve more than a "small beginning" on the practical way to holiness. True it is, that the Christian organization *officially* aspires, as the neutral organization *officially* may or may not aspire, to do God's will among men. This is significant, but no longer a matter of practice but a matter of principle, to be considered below.

Hence, in summary, Synod has warned the Christian against placing himself in a position of association with or responsibility for sinful practices, but has not seen this warning as implying mandatory membership in Christian separate organizations nor mandatory dissociation from all neutral organizations.

3. The Principial Argument

A third line of argument is based upon a discussion of the principial distinction between Christian and neutral organizations. The term commonly employed in this argument is "antithesis." I choose to discuss the argument as developed by Professor H. E. Runner in a series of speeches and articles extending over several years. In thus taking public exception to the position of a colleague, I simply select a representative exposition of a point of view. Whenever possible the phrase "principial argument" will be substituted for the surname to emphasize that it is a *view* and not a *viewer* that is under discussion.

As I grasp it, the principial argument runs like this: all culture, in the broadest sense but especially here in the sense of institutions, associations, and organizations, arises out of human activity. Human activity arises out of, and is governed by, the human heart. All culture, therefore, viewed as the embodiment of ideas and ideals or principles, has its roots in the hearts of men. Men's hearts are, viewed religiously, of two radically different kinds: apostate or non-elect, and redeemed or elect. Thus there arises two radically different kinds of culture: that rooted in the hearts of believers, obedient to Divine revelation; and that rooted in the hearts of unbelievers. Unbelieving or apostate institutions set their goals and structure themselves apart from Divine revelation, and thus objectify the self-asserted autonomy of fallen man. Such principles of apostasy came clearly to expression in the period of Western history known as the Enlightenment. Enlightenment man, in turn, came to clearest expression in the aims and ends of the great French Revolution of 1789 with its Liberty, Equality, Fraternity founded upon an assumed common humanity; with its goddess of reason enthroned in Notre Dame; with its exuberant conviction that man could, unaided and uninstructed by Divine revelation, remake his world and culturally save himself.

The principial argument further contends that American institutions were born out of the darkened genius and apostate heart of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and that American culture thus presents the "*purest* exhibition of Enlightenment thought to be found anywhere . . . ."[1] Thus, American labor unions and political parties, American educational institutions and social organizations, one and all, partake of the character of the anti-Godly heart which informs them, and cannot therefore be the institutional homes of the Christian. Closed to the believer are, for example, the CIO-AFL, the Republican and Democratic Parties, the public schools, and, by inference, t American Medical and Bar Associations, the N tional Association of Manufacturers and, to name more, the noon-day luncheon clubs whose names a legion.

The argument goes on to maintain that livi in the same world with apostate man and l apostate culture are God's elect, redeemed in pr ciple, out of whose hearts arises (or, should aris on this point further below) a radically differe culture which stems out of the God-ward orien tion established by God Himself in the believe heart. Thus two cultural principles divide all stitutional life antithetically between them, a every human organization arises out of one or t other, and shapes its goals or objectives in terms one or the other.

In short, the principial argument concludes, all life is lived out of principle, and if there a basically but two principles abroad in the wor it must make sense to ask: Out of which princi does *this* organization live? So, too, the Christi must consciously ask: Out of which principle I, or should I, live? And, then: May we w are of God's Spirit associate ourselves in comm organization with those who are of another spir The answer which the principial argument deriv from thus phrasing the question of how the Chr tian should live in the world is of course, *No!* inability, or indeed its unwillingness, to mainta this *No* without equivocation it is part of my pu pose to disclose.

The Analysis

The reader of the foregoing analysis of cultu and the Christian's relation to it will perhaps fi certain questions arising in his mind, some of th these, or like these:

(1) How broad a term in the context of t principial argument is this word *culture?* Is limited in its use, if not explicitly by definition, those human activities which take *organizatio* form? If so, however, what is the *principial stat* or *antithetical status,* of, say, the huge cultu accretions represented by the terms *science* a *custom,* to take no others?

(2) Does, indeed, all culture "flow forth fr man himself"?[2] And is it, then, antithetica divided at its origin by the belief or unbelief the heart whence it arose? If so, then if cultu means all forms and all products of human activi does *each* form bear the stamp of the kind of hea from which it came? And how can this theory be a plied in practice? Who will distinguish the contrib tions of believers from those of unbelievers to a significant element, institution, or organization

1. Runner, H. E., *Year of Decision: One Faith or Two,* p. 18 (mimeographed copies available at Calvin College Bookstore).

2. Runner, H. E., "Het Roer Om" (*Torch & Trump* Apr.-May, 1953).

lture? Can the Christian student choose to learn nd thus *to form himself by*) only the Christian ntributions to mathematics? (What, indeed, ould a "Christian" *equation* be?) Or, if culture limited to the idea of organization, can a huge nalgamation like the AFL-CIO, or the American ed Cross, be said to have arisen only from apostate arts? What, then, are the marks by which an stitution, organization, or other cultural element veals the kind of heart from which it arose? Is, en, the "wheat" clearly to be distinguished from e "tares" by human discernment through judgent of its cultural products?

(3) If, as Dr. Runner writes, "a new life-rection in man's heart must necessarily manifest self in a new mode of living, a new cultural form," nd, again, if "antithetical action is the necessary sult of our conversion,"[3] what do "necessarily" nd "necessary" imply? If culture flows inevitably om the human heart, as the principial argument aintains, and if it will bear "consciously or nconsciously"[4] the marks of the religious state of at heart, then why does Dr. Runner find himself *horting* the Christian to form *separate* organizaons? What happens *necessarily* will happen; and quires no admonition. No one exhorts Niagara fall. Now, if culture roots in the heart, and if e form it takes follows *necessarily* from the kind heart (believing or unbelieving) it arises out , and *if this description of the antithetical origins* culture is *sound*, then where there are apostate earts there will necessarily be apostate culture without exhortation) and where there are Chrisan hearts there will be, one would suppose, hristian culture (without exhortation). Why, hen, urge or demand *separate* organization?

The answer is, clearly, because Dr. Runner's escription of the origin and character of culture oes not itself validate his conclusion that *separate ultural action* is *mandatory* for the Christian. He ust exhort to this because his own analysis of the elation between belief and culture *does not imply* . We can all agree that "a new life-direction in an's heart must necessarily manifest itself in a ew mode of living, a new cultural form." True his is. But it does not imply that this "new mode" nd "new cultural form" *must* be that of *mandatory* eparate organization. So, too, we might all agree hat "antithetical action is the necessary result of ur conversion," without interpreting "antithetical" s implying mandatory separate organization. hat cleavage within the heart between the spirit f the new Adam and the spirit of the old Adam, which is the antithesis, need not manifest itself n the visible cleavage of separate organization in rder to be realized in the everyday life of the believer. To this the whole history of the Church and the saints bears witness. Dr. Runner exhorts for separate organization because his premises in reality do not, though he says they do, "necessarily" imply it.

(4) Not only does the principial analysis of cultural formation fail to provide premises for its interpretation of the organizational antithesis, but one may ask also if this analysis itself is not introduced as a substitute for a Biblical foundation. The contention that Christian membership in neutral organizations "is not permissible and consistent with a loyal Christian life and witness"[5] is not derived immediately from Scripture. This has been discussed briefly above, and, in addition it may be observed that the reader will search in vain for textual references in the principial argument. On what ground, then, does this "not permissible" rest? If not on immediate textual footing, then on clear inference from the Scripture? Does the Bible clearly teach that it is "not permissible" for those of one heart to engage in common cultural activity with those of another? Has there been, indeed, no organizational activity by Christians through all the centuries which was "consistent with a loyal Christian witness" except that manifested in separate organizations? Is this the teaching of Scripture? Let the reader search the principial argument for clear answers to these questions. He will search in vain!

(5) It *is* clearly Scriptural, and therefore accepted by all, that God's grace renews some human hearts, and that these redeemed persons bear cultural fruit. "By their fruits . . ." and "faith without works . . ." to name only examples of many such texts. That is, Scripture clearly teaches that the Christian will surely live and seek to live in the world as a Christian, *if* he *truly* be touched by God's grace; though it is equally clear that all "fall short," and some do better while others do worse in manifesting faith in their lives. The Bible is also clear on the characteristics of the Christian life in the world: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5: 22-23). "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge . . ." (II Pet. 1:5). And one need not quote the characterization of Christian love in I Corinthians 13, nor the qualities of conduct stressed in the Beatitudes. But where in all this is there *direct* or *inferential ground* for the contention that "separate Christian organizations of the kind described are a requirement of faithful Christian living and witnessing in our day"?[6] This conclusion is a *far* and *unsupported* leap, not from a Scriptural base, but from an analysis of culture and its for-

3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

5. *Year of Decision*, p. 6.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

mation. Or, at best, it is a *far* and *unsupported leap* from the commonly accepted Scriptural principle that "faith without works is dead."

In summary, where is the clear road of inference from the common Christian ground of belief in God's redeeming power manifesting itself in living fruitfulness, to the elevated plain reserved for separate organization? That Christian cultural action may be effectively pursued in separate institutions and organizations as one of the several ways Christians can act together in the world, no one denies. But that Christians *can* act, or *must* act, solely in the form of separate organization does not follow from this common position. If the principial argument draws its strength from the Bible, what is the chain of inference? If it rests upon an analysis of culture, *how is this analysis itself* validated, and how is it *oriented* to the Scriptures?

American Culture

Consider next the principial (that is, Dr. Runner's) interpretation of American cultural history, namely, the contention that the Enlightenment mind and the French Revolution set the pattern for American institutions.

Not much is gained in itself by quoting authorities one against the other. Further, history is notoriously patient of many and varied readings of its true course and real meaning. None the less, an evaluation of the principial approach to American history may suggest an insight into the principial method. That is, the principial thinker manifests a tendency to formulate first his theory, then to fit history to it for verification. If this is true, then it might be asked if this practice is not precisely an instance of the human autonomy which the principial thinker condemns. It would be autonomy in practice to substitute for a patient and humble obedience to history, a theoretical formulation which bends history to serve its own purposes. Why should the principial argument choose to do this?

The answer is that the argument for mandatory separate organization comes to history with a case to make concerning American institutions. This case is that the Christian *may not* join them. Why not? Well, because they are *apostate in principle.* If so, whence came these principles? Out of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the child of the Enlightenment. So it will be insisted that American institutions must have been shaped by Enlightenment thought and French revolutionary principles, not in part but *in toto.* And so Dr. Runner writes: "As in the writings of Burckhardt, so in all the great writings of the last century and a half, one thing stands out above all others. That is, the constellation of events we call the French Revolution."[7] "It can readily be est lished that faith in reason which characteri the period of the Enlightenment was likewise governing principle in the organization of our E public."[8] "I had hoped to be able to show you some detail how the Enlightenment outlook h formed our American civilization."[9] "There h always been, and there is today perhaps more th ever before, a widespread feeling that the Fren Revolution had something unique about it, that he was something of universal and decisive sign cance for the human spirit. Lest we get the impr sion that America was not involved, I might po out that the French Revolution was, in the wor of Morrison and Commager's *Growth of the Am ican Republic,* the precipitant of political pa formation in the U. S."[10]

That this is a misreading of American politi history in order to substantiate a pre-formulat conclusion may be suggested by beginning wi Morrison and Commager themselves! "The trut [of the Declaration of Independence] were not t creatures of Jefferson's mind . . . the obvious sourc for this philosophy were Harrington, Sidney, Loc and the actual experience of Americans."[11] word of France.

Writes Professor David Ritchie of Edinburgh his *Natural Rights*: "The principles of 1789 . . . a often spoken of, by those who admire them and those who reject them, as if they were the distin tive and peculiar creed of the French Revolutio But France deserves neither the credit nor t blame . . . . If the French may be blamed at in the matter, there is more ground for allegi that they simply plagiarised 'Anglo-Saxon' for ulas . . . . When Lafayette sent the key of the d stroyed Bastille by Thomas Paine to George Was ington, he was, in a picturesque symbol, confessi the debt of France to America."[12]

So also Charles and Mary Beard: "These hi doctrines [of the Declaration] . . . were not, sometimes fancied, French in their origin. As matter of fact, they were essentially English. . . ."

And so, too, Professor Crane Brinton in H *Shaping of the Modern Mind*: "There had be bread riots [in France] in the 1750's but not un Frenchmen were hungry for more than bread, n until their thinkers had taught them to hunger f a new constitution, for their 'natural rights,' n indeed until they had the example of the new Ame ican states and their bills of rights, assiduous

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
8. "Het Roer Om."
9. *Year of Decision*, p. 18.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
11. Morrison & Commager, *Growth of the Americ Republic*, I, p. 196.
12. Ritchie, D., *Natural Rights*, p. 3.
13. Beard, C. & M., *Rise of American Civilization*, p. 2

irculated in France by our minister Benjamin ranklin . . . were they ready for the concerted ction that made real revolution possible."[14]

Once more, Arnold Toynbee: ". . . the French evolution . . . drew its inspiration in part from ie events which had recently occurred in British merica . . . and in part from the century-old chievement of England which had been popularized nd glorified in France by two generations of philsophes from Montesquieu onwards."[15]

It may be replied at this point, of course, that to ay that America influenced France rather than the her way round may suggest that the principial eading of history has the current of ideas flowing the wrong direction, but does not show that iese ideas were anything but Enlightenment none ie less. So far, indeed, all I have tried to show that a number of competent historians dispute ie contention advanced by Professor Runner that merican culture was molded by influences arising it of the French Revolution. The question reains: what were the ideas which did shape merican institutions?

Sources of American Culture

Let us turn, then, to the man whose hand dealt rgely with the whole matter, Thomas Jefferson: only know that I turned to neither book nor mphlet while writing it [the Declaration]. All s authority rests then on the harmonizing sentients of the day, whether expressed in conversation, letters, printed essays, or the elementary books public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, c."[16] At the most, only an "etc." for France. hat ideas, then?

Jefferson answers: "the sentiments of the day." hese were embodied in American institutions, and iese were carried over the ocean to join (not eate) the melting-pot which boiled over in France 1789.

And, now, if we ask, What were those "sentiments the day," and whence came they? we may turn st to the principial argument to find again that it rces upon American history the conclusion it emands rather than accepting from history the iswer which history prescribes. "It can readily e established," I have quoted earlier, "that faith reason which characterized the period of the nlightenment was likewise the governing princie in the organization of our Republic."[17] Note ell, not "a" (one of several) but "the" (primary only) governing principle.

14. Brinton, C., *Shaping of the Modern Mind*, p. 9.
15. Toynbee, A., *Study of History*, pp. 280-281 (one-olume edition).
16. Jefferson, T., *Writings*, 1869 edition, VII.
17. "Het Roer Om."

No doubt Jefferson was deeply influenced by Enlightenment rationalism, but were there no other "sentiments of the day" at work, as powerful or even more so?

More than a century ago, a distinguished Frenchman visited America and carefully recorded his observations in what has become a classic study of our early culture. Wrote Alexis de Tocqueville: "The general principles which are the groundwork of modern constitutions — principles which were imperfectly known in Europe, and not completely even in Great Britain in the 17th century — were all recognized and determined by the laws of New England: the intervention of the people in public affairs, the free voting of taxes, the responsibility of authorities, personal liberty, and trial by jury were all positively established beyond discussion."[18]

From New England came those "sentiments" Jefferson found to hand. And if you think a moment, New England will mean but one thing to you: *the Puritans.* In the words of Professor Ritchie: "English Puritanism on American soil produced the Declaration of Independence."[19]

Upon further reflection the reader will recall that the informing spirit of Puritanism was Calvinistic. If it be remembered that, according to J. R. Motley, the animating spirit of the Dutch struggle for independence was also that of sturdy Dutch Calvinism, it will come as no surprise to find that able historians credit Calvinism with a large role in the formation of American independent institutions.

Of course, Puritan practice ranged from that of Plymouth Colony to that of Massachusetts Bay; and Puritan Calvinism ranged from the interpretations of Nathaniel Ward, through those of Robinson, Winthrop, and Hooker, to the affinity for rationalism in John Wise. And, therefore, quotations might be selected to make Purtanism out to be both more or less than orthodox Calvinism. But the body of Puritan thought and practice is adjudged to have been thoroughly Calvinistic by no less an authority than Dr. Abraham Kuyper, in whose lecture on "Calvinism, the Origin and Guarantee of Constitutional Liberties" ample space is devoted to emphasizing the part played by the *Puritans as Calvinists* in the foundation of American freedom and free institutions. After accepting as his own a quotation of the American historian Bancroft: ". . .the enthusiasm of my people for freedom is born out of their spiritual affinity for Calvinism," Kuyper goes on to say: "In [manifesting] this threefold constellation: unlimited political freedom, rigorous morals, and a believing profession of Christianity, the United States manifests its Puritan origins, the indomitable spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers, and

18. Tocqueville, A., *American Institutions*, pp. 36-37.
19. Ritchie, pp. 13-14.

a spiritual kinship with Calvin. After all, New England has left its imprint on the entire Union, and all the New England states were founded by martyrs for the Reformed faith."[20]

In his *Leven en Arbeid van Dr. A. Kuyper,* Winckel summarizes Kuyper's position thus: "The founders of America were the spiritual children of the English Independents, followers of Calvin . . . . In America, England, and France [Huguenots] was realized what had already long been taught by Beza and Calvin."[21]

To this judgment student after student of American institutions adds his weight. Writes Dr. Commager: "Puritanism, rationalism, and idealism were the three major sources of American philosophy; each was naturalized."[22] So Dr. Ralph Gabriel: "American constitutionalism, which seeks by means of a written document to restrain individuals, majorities, and even governments from wrong doing owes a heavy debt to that Frenchman who, in the summer of 1536 made his home in Geneva and began to expound the epistles of St. Paul."[23] The Frenchman he means is not — need it be said? — Rousseau but Calvin.

So, too, Harvard philosopher Ralph Barton Perry: "I claim only that a large part of the distinctively American tradition, culture, institutions and nationality consists in these two systems of ideals: the puritanism implanted in the 17th century, and the democratic creed disseminated in the 18th century . . . . It is safe to assume, then, that the influence of puritanism, in the broad Calvinistic sense, was a major force in the late colonial period, and that it contributed uniquely and profoundly to the making of the American mind when the American mind was in the making . . . ."[24] And further, he writes, in a sentence which may explain why some may hastily judge that the Enlightenment alone formed American culture: "The political ideas of the Declaration, while explained in the language and the temper of the Enlightenment, were in full accord with the principles embodied in the earliest colonial charters. For one hundred and fifty years the American mind had been prepared for their reception . . . they were recognized basic principles which . . . found their sanction in reason, conscience, and piety."[25]

"Long ago," writes Professor Richard Hofstadter, "Horace White observed that the Constitution of the United States 'is based upon the philosophy of Hobbes and the religion of Calvin.' "[26] And Merwyn Davies says boldly, quoting one of the greatest historians of modern times: "John Calvin was . . . what the German historian Leopold von Ranke called him: 'the virtual founder of America.' "[27]

Why no word of all this in the principial argument? *Why* the reluctance to credit America with founding their own institutions and initiating their own revolution? Why nothing of the then Dr. Kuyper sounded and able American historians echo? Why, on principial grounds, is *all* American history viewed as Enlightenment ideology and French apostasy? The answer has been suggested already: This is what happens to historiography when first obedience is paid to assumptions instead of to reality as God has sustained it. This is why Calvinism gets not even honorable mention; and *why, if rejoinder is made* to this discussion, it will probably be urged that Dr. Kuyper was quite mistaken, and the *Calvinism of the American Puritans was not "real"* Calvinism at all. The principial argument *must* have it that American culture is woven, warp and woof, top and bottom, from Enlightenment and apostate principles. It will cling desparately to this assumption because it is indispensable to the conclusion that no Christian may join neutral American institutions. Is this, then, the autonomous man in action?

Christianity in America

To complete the tale, what do the historians say of Christianity in American culture?

Wrote Dr. Kuyper in 1874: "Now the people of the United States, more than any other nation in the world, bear the incisive imprint of Christianity. This fact is undeniable."[28]

So had said de Tocqueville in 1835: "Upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention . . . . In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other; but in America I found that they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country."[29]

Lord Bryce in his famous *American Commonwealth* in 1889: "Christianity is in fact understood to be, though not the legally established religion, yet the national religion."[30]

So also, Dr. J. R. Slotemaker de Bruine in 1925: "[in America] one is neutral. Religiously, this c

20. Kuyper, A., *Het Calvinisme . . .*, p. 9 (trans. from Dutch).
21. Winckel, W.F.A., *Leven en Arbeid . . .*, pp. 102-103 (trans. from Dutch).
22. Commager, H., *The American Mind,* p. 26.
23. Gabriel, R., *The Course of American Democratic Thought,* p. 30.
24. Perry, R., *Puritanism and Democracy,* p. 34.
25. *Ibid.,* pp. 126-127.
26. Hofstadter, R., *American Political Tradition,*
27. Davies, A., *Foundations of American Freedom,*
28. Kuyper, *op. cit.,* p. 19 (trans. from Dutch).
29. de Tocqueville, *op. cit.,* p. 312.
30. Bryce, Lord, *American Commonwealth* (quoted Commager, *op. cit.,* p. 164).

ean two different things. On the one hand, eligious convictions may be considered so unimportnt that they are ignored and regarded as a peronal matter; on the other hand, the religious onsciousness may be so vital among large segments f the population that it is able to permeate all of fe, without being molested, and that therefore it eed not be safe-guarded by a separate organization ased on Christian principles. The latter alternative the situation in America."[31]

Finally, Mr. J. G. P. Westra in a study commisoned last year by the Canadian Reformed: "The eople of the U. S. and Canada, who are after all r the most part descendants of Christian immirants, have (un)consciously regarded every ember of the community as a Christian. There as a Christian society, governed by laws which general were Christian."[32]

Not rejoicing that this body of acute and learned bservers, whose number might easily be multiplied, stify with astonishing unanimity to the vitality early and recent America of Calvinism and other rms of Christianity, the argument for principial parate organization depreciates, ignores, or seeks explain away these judgments. Its assumptions ake thus a caricature of its delineation of Amerian culture and American history.

No one denies, least of all some of the historians hom I have been quoting, that more strands than ne — rationalism among them — went into the eaving of American culture in all its forms. efferson's sympathy for Enlightenment ideas is ressed by Dr. Kuyper, for example. All I am sisting upon is that *Calvinism too* was of crucial gnificance in American history, and played a remarkable role in securing the political liberties we ow enjoy and formed a still-living element in that mplex structure we now know as our culture. et due weight be given to this fact of history, and ne principial argument for mandatory separate rganization must needs look again to its premises. et the part Christianity played and now plays American institutional life be given full value, nd the principial argument loses much of its force nd of its absolutism. For, *just in so far* as it annot paint American culture *all* black, *just in so ar it ceases to be persuasive.*

What is Neutrality?

May the Christian join neutral labor unions, olitical parties, and other organizations? Dr. unner's answer is explicit: "Such membership is ot permissible and consistent with a loyal Christian life and witness."[33] Why not? "If, then, it is the major premise, the apriori assumption, of modern political parties and labor unions that action may not be motivated by appeal to any particular revelation (or what is assumed to be such) but rather only by appeal to that which unites us (the dictates of common reason — which by the way does not exist) then we have to do here with a fundamental clash of elementary principles."[34]

The assumption here is that neutrality means commitment to some common body of principles agreed to by *all* men *as men.* This body of principles is neither specified nor defined. Is this, perhaps, because such a body does not exist? In fact, American neutrality is by no means the assent to a given common creed to which appeal may be made; it is rather the right of appeal to *any* creed with special preference *accorded* to *none.* This neutrality is not definitive but permissive, not restrictive but liberating. This is why the absence of explicit reference to God's revelation in an organizational constitution is no bar to Christian witness in that organization. Of course, vigorous appeal might be made to some widely accepted ideal like, say, that of "fair play," but the essential idea of neutrality in American institutions is *not* the *presence* of a common mind, but the *absence* of coercion. Its origins lie in those New England constitutions to which reference has already been made. Neutrality in this sense is thus a God-ordained, and Calvinistically inspired right to Christian witness wherever and whenever the Christian has the courage to open his mouth. Last year, one lone Florida legislator raised his voice in the Florida Assembly to speak out *against* segregation measures which were *favored* by all 89 of his colleagues. This brave man — cranks threatened his life — obtained his right to be heard from the heritage of *neutrality* in American political life, a heritage we Calvinists may proudly claim as our own. To secure this precious right, brave men have died before this. Do we well if we fail to praise God for it now?

The Christian in America

"American culture is the *purest* exhibition of Enlightenment thought to be found anywhere,"[35] writes Dr. Runner.

What, then, will the serious Christian do in America? Suppose he is a student, and wishes to make his career in atomic physics. Though his choice were medicine, law or education, his plight would be much the same. For atomic physics he

31. Slotemaker de Bruine, J.R., "De Arbeidersbeweging Amerika" (*Stemmen des Tijds,* Mei 1920, p. 295) (trans. om Dutch).
32. Westra, J.G.P., *De Unions en de Union-Securities,* 9 (trans. from Dutch).
33. *Year of Decision,* p. 6.
34. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
35. *Ibid.,* p. 18

needs mathematics, referred to previously as an element in culture.

Obviously, the Christian student does not, and cannot, develop his own mathematics on a principial basis. Rather, he comes to possess, and in a real sense comes to be possessed and disciplined by (and this fact is significant in this context) a whole panorama of mathematical knowledge, or culture, ranging from the contributions of the pagan Euclid through those of the Enlightenment Leibnitz, the Catholic Pascal, and the agnostic Einstein, to name no others. If now our Christian student seeks to sort out the contributions made only by Christians, he is hopelessly lost. Yet if he takes seriously the injunction that culture must be discriminated according to the heart from which it arose, what is he to do?

To me it seems quite clear that the Christian student who masters Euclid and Einstein and who turns them to account in scientific research consciously pursued in respect and veneration of his Creator, does *thus* bring this mathematical truth *into subjection* unto Christ — his cultural task. Let this be granted, however, and the question presents itself: If the Christian may so act in the world of mathematics, why may he not so act in the world of union labor? In the CIO, too, has he no cultural task?

In short, *upon what principle* is to be *distinguished* that part of American culture which is *open* to the Christian from that part of American culture which is *closed* to him?

This is, of course, but an instance of the dilemma which the argument for principial mandatory organization meets all down the line. Dr. Runner's thesis "proves" embarrassingly too much. If the whole structure of American life is apostate, where and how will the Christian exist at all, if he may work in only Christian organizations?

Now, everyone knows that the attempt at *reductio ad absurdum* is indeed the cheapest form of criticism because it can be applied to almost any position with seeming effect. But I wonder, none the less, just how seriously the principial argument is taken by those who make it. If their governing assumption is that *all* of American culture is unbelieving in origin and form, their conclusion cannot be limited to closing just this or that organization to the Christian, unless some principle for this differentiation can be clearly stated. We are told that there is no neutral culture; it is always God or Baal. But *if* in America all is already Baal, and *if* it be assumed that the Christian may not associate himself with Baal, *then* the principial arguer should, I respectfully suggest, face the logic of his situation and either re-examine his own assumption or ready his bags for travel. For to live in any culture is to participate "consciously or unconsciously" countless of its institutions and organizations.

Some readers may remember that some su thought was in the mind of Mr. Enno Haan so years ago,[36] and in reply to him Dr. Runner ma a distinction between "loose" or "general" a "strict" organizations, the Christian being allow to join the former even though neutral, but n the latter unless Christian. This, however, is clea a practical and not a principial distinction, and can function as an escape from the dilemma of a or-none only if the rigid "God or Baal" is studious ignored. For, if "loose" is in effect a synonym f neutral, it obviously has no resting-place in t realm of institutional antithesis; if not, it does n solve the problem at all, for clearly there is no roo in the principial position for three kinds of orga izations: Christian, apostate, and "loose."

Again, it has been argued that only those neut organizations which set goals concerned with (a I quote Dr. Runner) ". . . justice, good governme social justice, economic justice" are closed to t Christian because "such goals may not be conceiv formulated or pursued by the Christian except a specifically Christian sense."[37] But this disti tion, too, does not really solve the problem of a or-none. The position of the cultural antithesis that *every* cultural form lives out of one heart another: apostate or redeemed. To select only fo classes of organizations from among the neut many does not make the others Christian, nor d it explain why the Christian is barred from th four but permitted to join the others.

Again, it has been argued that the Christian c "stand entirely outside" his culture, and "seek develop the principle of belief over against t the development of the principle of unbelief. Is not this pictorial representation of "steppi outside one's culture" in itself false to life as know it? What may it *mean* to "stand outsid our culture? What language, for example, wo one employ? Surely no living language is the c struction of a succession of Christian lexicographe And while thus "outside" his culture, what stre would the Christian walk? What laws would prot him? What customs would he obey? To wh common civil life would he be committed?

There is, really, no leaving one's culture. We a stamped, formed, bound by our heritage and h torical position. The very language in which c formulates his declaration of cultural independe is not his own; and the paper upon which

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36. Letter to the *Torch & Trumpet*, printed in issue Aug.-Sept., 1953.

37. Runner, H.E., "Does Christian Social Action Dem an Absolute Break?" (*Torch & Trumpet*, Aug.-Sept., 19

38. Runner, H., "Christian Organization" (*Torch Trumpet*, June-July, 1954).

eclaration is written is a gift of the pagan Chinese, ade now under patents protected by the neutral ate on machines invented by who knows what an of genius. Simon Stylites may have been raised *bove* his cultural milieu, but the pillar whereon he t was hewn for him. A culture is pervasive. It ay be molded, it may be leavened, it may be subected in part to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, but cannot be temporarily escaped or left behind.

Once more, it is argued that after Christians have oined themselves together "to reflect on the state nd the problems connected with it in the light of ivine revelation, and to be in the political sphere corporate witness to the law and the gospel of od, *then* they can look, together with men of ther principial bases, for areas of cooperation in any of the surface issues and technical matters at always demand treatment."[39] It might be oticed how gingerly is approached cooperation with en of other principial "bases" — and one might egister surprise at the plural; for, strictly speakg, of "other" principial "bases" there can be only ne. Cooperation is limited to "surface issues," nd to "technical matters." At best this, too, is practical distinction; and in the long run, I dare ay, the most "surface" of surface issues must be educed to a principial base, and the most "techical" matters cannot escape enrollment under one r the other principial banner. What else is posible where all neutrality is denied by hypothesis? ne of the immutable characteristics of a line is at it has only two sides, so to say, and really no imension. The antithetically conceived cultural orld is divided by a line, and this must mean that ll issues and all technical matters must fall on one ide or the other. If the principial argument wishes o view some issues and some organizations nonntithetically, then it should reconsider its primary ssumptions and rephrase some of its argumentative anguage.

The final argument I will consider is the one that, n a sense, cooperation between believer and unbeliever, *after* separate organizations have been stablished, is possible because ". . . the unbeliever annot think his way loose from God's creation . . ." nd is therefore "compelled to deal with real porions of God's created order."[40] This concession o cooperative action between cultures might be nore significant if it were accompanied with a clear lefinition of which "real portions of God's created rder" were in view; and, further, if there were ome delineation of what practical life-situations re here implied. It is a favorite dialectical device o maintain that men, as men, have and *at the ame time* have not all things in common, or share the "metaphysical situation." But as soon as this device comes down from the realm of ontology into your life and mine, it does not clarify but only serves to mystify our organizational problems. To-have-as-one-has-not may be a neat intellectual problem, but it solves none of the questions associated with which club, union, or group to join. If this device is taken to mean that when they are organized, then Christians can work out this "real-portions-of-creation" relationship with unbelievers, one wonders at once why Christians cannot so work when they stand alone or act as members of a neutral group. How does *organization* affect what all men *already have in common*, namely, "real portions of God's created order"?

In Summary

In short, what those who are not persuaded by the principial argument ask for is consistency. Why is not Synod requested, they wonder, to declare that membership in *all* neutral organizations, that is, then, in *all institutions arising out of American culture*, is incompatible with loyalty to the Reformed faith? Or, *upon what principle* is labor singled out? Is the doctor barred from his medical association, the dentist from his dental association, the farmer from his grange, the merchant from his community retail association, the businessman from his clubs and trade associations, the lawer from his bar association, the executive from his corporation, and all of them alike from both major political parties, the Red Cross, the noon-day luncheon clubs, and why prolong the list? Have not these grown out of American culture? Are they not neutral? On which side of the antithesis do they root?

These are not rhetorical questions. They phrase simple, concrete problems which arise almost at once to the mind of anyone who takes the principial argument in earnest, and they arise every day in the life of each Christian believer as he moves about in his community, and seeks to be a witness within it.

Probably not many believers would accept the proposition that all the associations I have named, plus the many others one might add, are closed to the Christian. No believer could accept the proposition that *all* American institutions, including the neutral state, are closed to Christians, for then Christians would cease to live in America. But, the position which takes as its starting point the assumption that all American culture is formulated in terms of principles which are anti-Godly in character, and which further assumes that such culture is therefore closed to the believer, would gain in consistency what it lost in popularity if it proposed forthrightly and without evasion such a program, or if it offered clear and principial

39. "Does Christian Social Action . . . "
40. *Ibid.*

grounds for banning some organizations and not others.

What I have sought to make clear may be summarized in a series of questions and propositions which are no substitute for the fuller exposition but may serve to clarify it if that is necessary:

1. Neither the Scriptural nor the practical arguments for mandatory separate organization are persuasive to all believers.

2. The principial analysis of "culture" does not clarify the meaning of the term, and leaves questions as to the relation of the Christian to *all* aspects of culture, as well as questions regarding the Scriptural foundation of both its own cultural analysis and its insistence upon mandatory separate organization.

3. American culture was not shaped solely by the Enlightenment mind, nor was it substantially influenced by the French Revolution.

4. American culture arose from, and embodies now, a complex of ideologies and creeds, among them Calvinism itself.

5. But, even were it true that American culture was, and is, widely infected with Enlightenment rationalism, this general premise does not demo strate that any given American organization is infected. For this reason, the principial argume must insist that all American culture is unbeliev in origin.

6. But, even were American culture pur Enlightenment in spirit and origin, and therefo not explicitly Christian, neither Scripture nor Calv nor competent Reformed scholars consider t fact in itself an automatic ban against Christi membership in American institutions, nor a manda for separate organization.

7. Were the principial argument accepted face value, namely, that because American cultu is apostate in character, therefore Christians m not belong to neutral organizations, then the Chr tian should be obliged to eschew participation *not one* or *two* organizations, but in *all* Americ institutions.

8. Or, if the principial argument does not obli the Christian to abandon *all* association with American organizations, then there should be ma explicit the *principle* (not the practice) upon whi he may distinguish those institutions which he *m* from those he *may not* join.

A Look at the Dutch

By John T. Daling

The observations I make here are based on fairly representative experiences and impressions, ranging over wide areas of Dutch life and gained from a recent visit to the Netherlands. Through the courtesy and wide influence of Professor Jan Waterink, of the Free University of Amsterdam, I was privileged to shake hands with Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard, to attend a top-level *antirevolutionaire* political rally, monthly meetings of the *professorenkrans* of the Free University, to talk with executives and make tours of the huge Philips plant in Eindhoven and the glassworks at Leerdam, to lecture to students at the Free University and to talk with them, to visit with various educational and church leaders, and to have many other significant experiences, including a most delightful three-week tour with Professor Waterink through Europe. On my own, I visited with farmers in their centuries-old homes, in fact stayed with them a couple of weeks, talked with store clerks and laboring men, schoolteachers and policemen, inspected the huge reclamation project in the Ijsselmeer, and with a little Volkswagen nosed around t length and breadth of this very sight-seeable lan

My observations are those of a Dutch-Americ and are very likely not free from bias. While the Netherlands I tried hard to leave the Unit States and its ways behind, to live into the life the Dutch as much as possible, to appreciate a to accept it for what it is. But in collecting n thoughts about those delightful six months, n that another six months of reflection and evalu tion have already elapsed, I cannot help but vie my experience through American eyes. I striv however, to make this "look" as objective as I ca

Size of the Land

One doesn't move about much in the Netherlan before he is impressed by its compactness, its sma ness. It is an area less than 130 miles by 100 mil (12,582 square miles) and not all of this area tillable. There are large areas of dune land alo the North Sea, and much "desert" land in t

luwe of Gelderland and Overijssel. Much space taken up by the numerous canals and some inland es, and the big Ijsselmeer. Cities, extensive adways, industries, airports, and occasional rec-ational areas further reduce the tillable acreage. Jammed into this small confine is a population some ten million people — an average of some 0 persons for each square mile. Geographically, nsterdam is smaller than Grand Rapids Mich-an; yet it has more than four times as many peo-e (900,000). Along almost any highway or by-ay one in a very few minutes comes upon popula-n concentrations ranging from villages to siz-le cities.

In the United States there are also areas where e population is dense; from the top of the Em-re State Building on a clear day one can see an ea (perhaps 2,000 square miles) where some ,000,000 people live. But the Netherlands is a *untry*, that is, something which is or intends to a self-sustaining unit not only governmentally t also industrially, agriculturally, commercially, d the like.

It should be remembered that this element of iny-ness" with its attendant problems is one of e factors that enters significantly into the make-of "the Dutch way."

General Economy

The economy is not one of luxury but of frugal-y. There is no widespread poverty as in the ys of our parents or grandparents (various forms social insurance have taken care of that — in-rance for old age, infirmity, sickness, unemploy-ent, large families), but the people still have to unt their pennies.

It is a close and perhaps almost closed economy. nce labor is cheap and material expensive, much repaired and repaired instead of replaced (I had ordinary light fuse repaired for fifteen cents; new one costs forty-five cents!). The entire onomy is so delicately balanced that "minor" ljustments in wage scales in one area quickly fect the price of rural products in another.

Wages for ordinary workers are very low in mparison with those for the professional classes. the United States teachers and preachers get ttle more — perhaps less — than many semi-killed artisans; in the Netherlands the differential about threefold. Physicians and lawyers, how-ver, in relation to other professional groups do ot have the larger incomes there which they pur-rtedly have here.

Taxes are high and many. So-called luxury items re taxed individually and repeatedly; for example, very three months one pays a tax on his piano or adio, the amount of the tax being dependent upon he size of the instrument. Income taxes take bigger slices in lower brackets there than here. The employer — even of only one full-time house servant — must pay a sizable percentage of the wage for various kinds of social insurance.

Food, clothing, fuel, gasoline, and similar items (except perhaps government-controlled house rent) are priced high in comparison with prices and wages in the United States. (Because of money-exchange value, however, the American with his dollars increases his Dutch purchasing power by about one-third.) Taxes on autos are so high that few can afford them for purely personal use.

Much of the present "tightness" of the Dutch economy is the result of World War II (the Dutch economy was relatively good between the two wars). An almost unbelievable amount of war pillage or robbery had to be replaced, quite a bit of war damage had to be restored, and flood damages by war and storm had to be repaired. The Germans pillaged the copper wire of the electric train-lines and the iron rails, bicycles, autos, and live-stock. Many bridges, both small and large, were repeatedly destroyed. Each time they had to be rebuilt at Dutch expense. The inner section of Rotterdam and its entire harbor were demolished by bombs. (Both of these catastrophies turned out to be blessings in disguise: the former had long been considered a problem, and the latter, now completely modernized, is said to be the busiest seaport in Europe.) Extensive areas were heavily bombed in the Arnhem and Nijmegen regions, and block after block of homes in Ijmuiden, Katwijk-aan-Zee, and other places along the North Sea were razed by the Germans so that they could have an unobstructed view of the coastlines where they expected Allied invasions. Huge chunks of dikes, lands, and properties were damaged by floods. Through rigid economizing, high taxation, and prodigious effort all of this has been completely restored in the relatively short period of ten years. I saw the skeleton of only one bombed building in the Netherlands; in Germany, northern Italy, France, and England I saw extensive bombed areas still in ruin.

Undoubtedly the dispossession of the East Indies at a time when so much had to be done at home has aggravated the tightness of the present economy. The East Indies had for the Dutch been a veritable gold mine. It provided an easy source of many cheap raw materials, a ready-made market for many Dutch products, lucrative returns for Dutch investments, attractive offers for trained Dutch to spend some years in governmental or professional service and then return with good pensions, and an avenue for relieving the pressure of over-population.

To compensate for this loss, there is at present a tendency in the Netherlands toward increased

industrialization. But this way of relieving the economic problem is in turn creating social problems because there is also a current movement to decentralize industry. New industries and factories are starting in some of the "back areas" close to the source of labor. (Mechanized farming — with the initial aid of the Marshall plan — has deprived many hand laborers of their work.) One of the results of this is that many of the younger generation have more money in their pockets weekly than many of the older generation ever had at any one time. Thus various sociological problems are arising in such new areas.

There are also in progress truly Herculean attempts to increase the amount of tillable land by wresting it from the water. Ultimately about 550,000 acres are to be reclaimed in this manner, and thus the total farmable land will be increased by about ten per cent. Tremendous financial outlay is involved in such construction, and in the cost of the bureaucracy needed to plan and manage the use of the land. Extensive areas of heather land unproductive for centuries also have been added in recent years to arable acreage through the use of massive farm tools and commercial fertilizer.

To understand the Dutch way it is not wholly irrelevant to keep in mind the generally frugal, fairly rigid, carefully controlled, and delicately balanced economy of the nation.

Some Generic Characteristics of The Dutch Way

Theoreticism

Taken as a whole and quite generally, the temper or spirit of the Dutch way is quite theoretic or intellectualistic. Practically every subject is intellectualized, thought through, debated, and discussed at great lengths before action is taken. At times deliberations are so prolonged that the final decision is no longer applicable because the situation has in the meantime changed significantly. "Reasons" are given or found for practically everything.

The premium placed on "theoreticism" is partly reflected in the many people with professional titles who hold commanding positions in government, and the many with doctoral degrees in executive and administrative positions in business, commerce, and industry. It can be illustrated in such a prosaic matter as learning how the car runs before one is taught how to run the car.

This theoreticism spreads through the entire society. Very few jobs are available without a diploma for that particular kind of work. Farm hands keep available the diploma from their "landbouw school" which gives evidence of the quality of their milking; among other things a person must have at least four different diplomas before he start being a storekeeper.

Schooling in the Netherlands is very speci It is not a way of preparing a person for life, of preparing him for a specific way to make a ing. Specialization in education begins alre after the sixth year in school. There are prepa tory schools for almost every conceivable kind occupation: even prospective dock workers must to their own kind of school.

There is much reading — by the "common" p ple too. Book stores abound, and with books practically everything. Judging from the displ of every type of travel book, one concludes that Dutch make quite a theoretic quest of their vacati ing. There is perhaps a reciprocal relations between the widespread interest in reading and almost congenital bent toward theoreticism. F thermore, the Dutch have much "leisure" time. H ing neither cars or T.V., nor much space in wh to move around, many of them read books.

In contrast to the Dutch way and its theoreticis the American spirit is much more experimentalis and activistic. The American spirit urges one go ahead and try it," and almost anybody does; Dutch spirit demands an almost perfectionistic tellectual grasp before one may do something, a only those may try to do who first show that th understand. Incidentally, it would take someo with a greater impartiality than I can muster maintain that on the whole the quality of Du workmanship is superior to American because this theoreticism.

Compartmentalization

In the Netherlands there are no "jacks of trades" nor even "jacks of several trades." T ghost of the guild system of the Middle Ages still abroad in the land. Each person does or rat may do only that for which he is trained. Ther no use in applying for a specific job unless one in his possession a diploma for doing that kind work.

Stores are highly specialized too. A grocery st sells only staple groceries; another store sells o fresh fruits and vegetables. A tobacco store is only place where one can buy cigarettes. Only dairy store handles dairy products. There is meat market for meat from hoofed animals, anot for meat from clawed animals. An *apotheek* medical prescriptions, but does not sell patent me cines and cosmetics. These are available only a *drogisterij*. Only a bakery sells bread. So stores specialize in umbrellas only; others are clusively concerned with collector's stamps or ma

The farmer considers it his job only to farm; calls in a landscape gardener to plant the flow around his house. The home owner calls the c

ıter to make minor repairs that require only a mmer. Housewives do not bake, nor do their id servants — that's the job of the baker.

The point is *not* that the Dutch are congenitally e-track minded, but that their over-all system is constituted that it rather readily leads to such a te of mind. There are no doubt many who on e basis of their inherent capacities could do other rk without having specific diplomas, but the sys-n won't allow it.

We should remember, however, that the country small, the people many, and opportunities few. nce safeguards must be set up to insure a rela-ely stable society in which each has an occupation.

Tripartitism

Dutch political and social life is almost universal- and seemingly irrevocably split up into three mps along philosophico-religious (or confession- lines. These are the liberal, humanistic, or n-believing group, which is the largest; the Ro-an Catholic group; and the Protestant group, of ich there are many splinterings and among which e Anti-revolutionaire is the largest.

I am quite sure that the cause for this "tripartı-m" is not directly a "principial" deduction from specific theological system. Rather, tripartitism s general historical origins and has been condi-ned or influenced sociologically. Its roots are bedded deep in past ages of tradition, and of so-l as well as religious conflict.

The Dutch just simply cannot understand that r political and social system is devoid of partition-g along strictly religious or confessional lines he differences in our system are more along eco-mic and social lines). It is for them inconceiv-le that in the United States it is possible for both ain residential candidates to be members of the me denomination and even the same congregation r to none).

This threefold partitioning is not only political. leads to triple multiplication of many social, edu-tional, economic, artistic, and recreational agen-es. Correspondingly there is increase in taxation cause so many of these are subsidized by the state. hen any one of the three camps makes a demand the state, the others are likely to make similar emands.

The "Christian" radio reflects somewhat the en-re situation. The State owns the radio stations d allots radio time. Apparently, however, a hristian organization must step in to provide suit-le religious programming. Some Netherlanders ho have been in the United States were both sur-rised and amazed that our so-called "neutral" dio stations provide so much religious program-ing, both musical and sermonic.

The "free press" as we know it is relatively unknown in the Netherlands. The American press carries religious news items, including church announcements of one kind or another, without, for the most part, any discrimination. The press in the Netherlands is not neutral, and therefore separate newspapers have to be started to carry news of each religious group. From the standpoint of a *news*-paper the end product is often poor, although feature articles are often good.

Organizationism

The Dutch have a passion for organization. Almost every aspect of life is the subject of an organization. When it is discovered that certain of these organizations have something in common with or overlap with others, another organization is set up to take care of this situation.

The Amsterdam telephone directory lists over one hundred organizations under the term *Vereniging* and more than forty under the term *Bureau.* Among these is the Bureau voor Levens-en-Gezins Moeilijkheden van de Katholieke Stichting voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid (Society for Life and Family Difficulties of the Catholic Institute for the Spiritual Health of the Nation) and a Vereniging voor de Bescherming van Voetgangers (Society for the Protection of Pedestrians). There is also a Society of Christian Tobacconists.

Some of the reasons for this "organizationism" may be learned from an article in a recent issue of a Dutch periodical. The writer of the article laments the fact that there are so many "forgotten groups" which have no organization and thus no full-time workers (*vrijgestelden*) to plead their cause; which do not have their own federation (*bond*), and which do not have their own journals (*geen eigen krant*). These forgotten groups include the many who are "duped" (*gedupeerd*) because of the depreciation of the Dutch currency — the retired, the holders of insurance policies, the inadequately pensioned; others, such as writers, music teachers, self-employed wooden shoe makers and cigar makers, shrimp peelers, vegetable scrubbers (*groente-en-aardappelen-schoonmaaksters*), women who do part-time housework. For these and similar groups there are apparently no social security regulations. The writer therefore lauds the Raad voor Gereformeerde Sociale Arbied (Council for Reformed Social Action) for its decision to institute an investigation to find out which actually are the "forgotten groups" and what the consequences of their existence are for social work.[1]

The point relevant here is the complaint that these "forgotten groups" have no organization nor

1. See "Vergeten Groepen," *Belijdenis en Beleven*, Feb. 15, 1957.

separate journal (this latter is a necessity in organizationism and is further indication of theoreticism as well as compartmentalism.)

It seems that the Dutch cannot leave much to individual initiative. In practically every area of living there are organizations. Even recreation gets to be organized: parties are organized to take walks or to go on trips, not only in other countries but even within the small borders of the Netherlands. There is a "Christelijke" Reisvereninging ("Christian" Travel Society), plus dozens of others.

It may well be that the inner structure of the Dutch system is so delicately balanced that much of its living and doing must proceed in organized ways, otherwise there would be chaos. The indigenous tripartitism adds to the complexity.

My impression is that with this welter of organization there is little left for the individual to do. He is likely to become dependent upon and lost in the organization. The rank-and-file member has little or no opportunity to exercise his own personal responsibility. Outside of his organization he is likely to feel lost. There is much talk in Dutch academic circles about the American "mass man," but actually there seems to be much more of "mass man" (be it tripartite) in the Netherlands itself. Granted the average American is "mass man" in some respects, he is in many respects much more individual man, "on his own"; there isn't as much of his life organized for him as by him.

Paternalism

The government steps in at almost every level of Dutch life and living. It not only finances and builds huge tracts of apartment homes but it also supervises and manages them, and its officials decide who may live in which apartments. The State owns the radio stations and the railway system; it runs a banking system, and engages in many other activities which in America are controlled by private enterprise.

Individual initiative is at a minimum. Governmental officials determine where stores may be located and how many of each kind; they determine where physicians may practice and how many physicians may be in a given locality; they also determine how many *apotheeks* (Prescription filling stores) may be in the locality.

If an individual wants to build a house, he must not only have permission to do so but he must also submit his detailed plans. These plans are then almost microscopically scrutinized by no less than twenty *ambtenaren,* each of whom, zealous to justify his position, seeks for some item in the plans to question. The items scrutinized range from the general style of the dwelling — whether it is in keeping with its surroundings — to the size and location of windows. It takes from six months to two years to process the plans. I saw a new fa home which the owner had wanted so construc that the living-room picture window faced the ro however, an official in the plan-processing depa ment maintained that a farmer's living-room vi should not be of the street but of his land. T house was built as this official insisted; otherw there would have been no house.

Government crop control is rigid. No more th one-seventh of one's land may be devoted to po toes, even if this "land" happens to be a garc plot. Nor may a potato be grown in the same s until three years have passed. And officials ch this assiduously. While I was visiting him, one my uncles had to destroy part of a row of potat in his small garden plot because he had not wai the full three years on that little area.

Through its Ministry of Education the State d tates the educational policy of the schools. It a supervises the formulation and administration the final examinations in the various grades least at the secondary level).

Thus one could go on. In almost every area th is dictation from the top downward. The "autho tarian" attitude is rampant in the land. *Ambtenar* or office-holders do not consider themselves pub servants but public officials, and they are quite sistent on being officious toward their fellow c zens (although they can be ingratiating to forei ers). Even Reformed church government see more autocratic in the Netherlands than in Am ica.

Stratification

Class distinction and class consciousness perva the Dutch system. The Dutch maintain that th are democratic but their democratic attitude quite an aristocratic twist. This "aristocracis is not based so much upon blood-lineage as it is on intellect, and it is rather closely associated w one's role-status in society. Thus the *arbeid* or laborer, is really looked down upon (even farmers) simply because he is an unskilled labor and he most likely is that either because he la the intellectual power to get a diploma for so other kind of work or because he or his ancest wasted their substance. The main question in Netherlands is not how much does one make, how expert is one in what he does, nor whether has potentialities for doing other things, but w is the "rank" of what one does. And one is trea accordingly in all his relationships.

Some Personal Conclusions

I have returned from my visit with a deeper conviction that the Reformed *faith* is *one* where it is held, but that Reformed *positions* (or view

ay be different or varied, depending on time and untry and circumstance, and that Reformed *prac-es* may be manifold, depending on custom and adition, as well as upon other factors.

I have now become convinced that the Dutch way part of the Dutch system; that the Dutch system a highly integrated, very involved, and delicately lanced system; that this system has been greatly nditioned both historically and sociologically; d that many of the Reformed "positions" and ractices" in the cultural areas are, almost in-itably, more a result of historical and sociological nditioning than of "principial" considerations. nsequently, to incorporate without significant alifications a part of the Dutch system, whether m the social, economic, political, educational, or clesiastical area — even on the ground of "Re-rmedness" — into another system (be it Amer-an, South African, Hungarian, North African, ylonese, Japanese, etc.) is, at the very least, to ve an unintelligent disregard for history and ciology. The Dutch way, including "Reformed-ss" in cultural areas, work out fairly well for the tch because they are Dutch, that is, because eir whole historical and sociological complex is culiar to them.

It is folly to argue whether the Dutch system is *tter* than the American or the American better an the Dutch. That would be like arguing wheth-a pear is better than a peach. Both systems or ays can be described and analyzed with respect to rious features and characteristics, but to compare em as to betterness is futile. They are simply *fferent*. No doubt the Dutch way is better than e American way for the Dutch, but from this it es not follow that the Dutch system is better for e Americans. Both systems have had different storical roots and sociological conditioning. If e really believe that God reveals Himself in his-ry, then the fact of cultural difference must be ken seriously.

Now that I have visited the Netherlands I am ginning to question more seriously whether the Reformed *faith* is such that in its applications to the cultural areas of life it must always be applied in exactly the same way to the "same" problem, regardless of the time, the country, and the circumstance in which the problem presents itself. I now think that it will be a sad and tragic day for the Reformed *faith* if its "positions" and "practices" become frozen to a given time, country, and circumstance; if, in other words, these positions and practices must be universally accepted throughout the Reformed world because they are accepted in some part of it. God makes history through the instrumentality of man, and history is fraught with change. Hence, it seems to me, our task is to live out the Reformed *faith* in an American way in the American system. This system has roots, conditions, and a genius which are quite different from those of the Dutch.

I must further remark that I returned with a keener awareness of and a much deeper appreciation for "the American way." I have come to see better that the American way is much more than a so-called "higher standard of living" in terms of material goods such as autos, bathtubs, refrigerators, and the like. It is a way of great freedom and almost unlimited opportunities for the underprivileged. It is a way of extravagance, but also of wholesome liberality. It is a way of concern for fellow human beings as persons. The followers of this way direct their inner being outward more than inward. The followers of this way, by their general education and environmental possibilities, are generally more adaptable and flexible. It is a way that gives people a greater chance not only to nurture but also to exercise the variety of their own God-given potentialities.

We should thank God for our rich Dutch heritage which has nurtured us in our infancy and childhood. But now it is time — or ought to be — for us Americans to set forth the Reformed *faith* in terms of our own genius. To do less, it seems to me, is to affront God, who providentially placed us in America as He placed our forebears in the Netherlands.

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Pages From the Past

(For the Centennial Year — a collection of contemporary accounts and documents which reflect something of the origin a developing life of the Christian Reformed Church. Selected and edited by Dr. George Stob)

Epilogue to the Secession of 1857

The leading spirit in the movements which resulted in the Secession of 1857 was Gijsbert Haan, whose *Stem Eens Belasterden* was reproduced in translation in the December 1956 and January 1957 issues of *The Reformed Journal*. Haan's agitation against the Dutch Reformed Church was characterized by members of Classis Holland as a "trampling under foot of the brethren," and for it Haan was rebuked and Classis Holland appointed a day of prayer against that spirit.

The day of prayer was held on April 10, 1856. On April 14, 1856, Haan and a group of his followers resigned their membership in the Dutch Reformed Church in Grand Rapids and began to hold meetings of their own in a private home. These were the beginnings of what became the Secession of 1857.

The movement toward Secession got considerable impetus from the fact that the minister of the Second Dutch Reformed Church in Grand Rapids — the Rev. H. G. Klijn — joined in with the secession of Haan and his group, in January 1857. This group, with Klijn as their minister, organized themselves into an independent church on March 19, 1857.

The Rev. Klijn handed in one of the four documents of Secession that were presented to the April 1857 meeting of Classis Holland. He also became president of the first Classical meeting of the newly organized denomination that was formed out of the various seceding elements, and was co-signer with the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch of the communication sent to the Christian Seceded Church of the Netherlands, in which the new little church asked for recognition and support (cf., *The Reformed Journal*, April 1957).

It is worthy of note that neither the Rev. Klijn nor Gijsbert Haan remained with the church which they helped bring into existence. Both of them, each for different reasons and at different times, returned to the church from which they had seceded.

The Rev. Klijn, who seems to have been a rather unstable and indecisive character, was troubled about his action very soon after the new church was organized. While he gave notice of secession to the April 1857 meeting of Classis Holland, he was present at the next following session of the Classis — in September 1857 — making confession of his error and guilt and asking for forgiveness and restoration as a member of the Classis of Holland. It is interesting to compare Gijsbert Haan's explanation of Klijn's defection to the Dutch Reformed Church (cf. Haan's "Stem," *The Reformed Journal*, Jan. 1957, p. 20), with the record which appears in the minutes of the meeting of Classis Holland, held on September 9, 1857 (cf. *Classis Holland Minutes*, 1848-1858, pp. 252-254). The record of these minutes, bearing on Klijn, is as follows:

Art. 3. The President announces that the Rev. Mr. H. G. Kleijn, for some time seceded from the church, but now desirous to be reunited with it, is present. For further information the Rev. Mr. Van der Meulen states that he, together with Rev. Oggel, were invited [to come] to Grand Rapids as Church Visitors; heard Rev. Kleijn confess his guilt in offending against fraternal fellowship, also in the hearing of consistory and congregation; and conferred with him extensively with regard to what had happened, with satisfaction: as a result which, subject to the approval of the Classis, th admitted him to the pulpit and made him eligi to receiving a call. After this explanation, R H. G. Kleijn [was] invited himself to present interests to the assembly. Hereupon Rev. Kle discussed his error and guilt on account of havi offended against fraternal fellowship. [He] clares himself to feel deep regret over the pain caused the brethren, and as he trusts that he h found forgiveness with God, so he requests also forgiveness of the brethren and restoration as member of the Classis of Holland.

After he had withdrawn from the meeting, assembly, upon motion of one of the members, ma fests cheerful readiness to receive [him] aga brother Van Hees, however, is of the opinion th the reverend gentleman falls in the class of th who must be sent for a year to New Brunswick, learn the doctrine and character of the Dutch R formed Church in America; which proposal fin no support, both because there never has been a such rule made with regard to ministers comi from outside. The Rev. Mr. Van Vleck presents consideration that the breach was not so much m ignorance as chiefly suspicion of the brethren, wh ought not to be very lightly glossed over. It is solved to deal with the reverend gentleman abo this suspecting of the brethren, and to cause h to read the translated "Succinct Tract" about doctrine, discipline and service of the Dutch R formed Church in America, and having obtain from him a satisfactory declaration with regard this suspicion of the brethren and union with us Dutch Reformed Church in America, [then] to ceive him with open arms and to request him to ta his seat as a member of the Classis. . . .

Art. 7. The President asks Rev. Kleijn wheth he is convinced that the body which calls itself Dutch Reformed Church really must be ackno edged to be such. He replied to this, that he for erly already cherished this conviction, was shak therein by the acceptance of unfavorable rumo but now anew sees from the above translated tre ise that this body rests upon the foundations l by the Synod of 1618 and 1619, at Dordrec After the President had presented to him also guilt of suspecting his brethren, the reverend gent man confesses also with regard to this his repenta

regret; whereupon the President, in the name the assembly, announces to him the cheerful diness [of the Classis] to receive him again as ninister in the Classis; after which, upon in- ation, having received congratulations [the orig- l Dutch: "zegenwenschingen" —Ed.], he takes seat as a member of the Classis. Further, it esolved to inform the community, through "The llander," of what has taken place.

In the first recorded minutes of the seceded church, lated a month later than the above-mentioned meeting f Classis Holland — October 7, 1857 — the following ninute occurs:

Rev. Vanden Bosch has informed the assembly t he, with J. Gezon and J. Gelok, elders from and Rapids, have admonished Rev. Kleijn with erence to his accomplished action of returning to Dutch Reformed Church, and earnestly exhorted n to correct the matter and come to confession of sin, but Rev. Kleijn persisted in his error.

Gijsbert Haan also returned to the Dutch Reformed Church, sometime in the early part of the year 1862. His reasons were quite different from those of Rev. Klijn.

Gijsbert Haan was an elder in the Grand Rapids church. t seems to have been his conviction that election to the office of elder is for life. In January 1861 he refused either to retire from office (as article 27 of the Church Order stipulated) or to allow his name to be placed in nomination with another so that he might be subject to election.

The Grand Rapids consistory therefore decided that Haan should be continued in the office of elder for another year. They based their decision on the consideration allowed in Article 27 that retirement of office bearers should not occur if the "profit" of the church required otherwise. It was judged that Haan, because of his gifts, should continue to serve. Actually, however, it was fear of Gijsbert Haan that moved the consistory to yield to Haan's refusal either to retire or submit to re-election. This is evident from the fact that at the Classis meeting of April 5, 1861, two elders and two deacons confessed that they had sinned in permitting Haan to continue in office, since they foresaw that this would be unprofitable for the congregation.

That Haan's continuance in office, without his submitting to re-election, was not profitable for the congregation became evident from the fact that a considerable segment of the Grand Rapids congregation registered protest to the Classis. In consequence of this the Classis finally decided to dissolve the entire Grand Rapids consistory, and set up a nomination from which elders and deacons were to be elected. Gijsbert Haan's name was also placed in nomination for the office of elder. Whether he was elected or not is not known. In any event, whether because he was not elected or because he disapproved of his not being automatically continued in office, Haan became a dissenter. He was eventually placed under the first step of discipline — because he refused to recognize the consistory, because he conducted himself in unbecoming fashion, and because he failed to attend the church services. In March 1862 the Grand Rapids consistory took note of the fact that ex-elder G. Haan had returned to the Dutch Reformed Church.

The following minutes of the Classis meetings of the seceded church show something of the difficulties that the new denomination had with the man who more than any other led the way to the Secession of 1857.

Art. 13 of the minutes of the Classis meeting of February 6, 1861, records the following protest and action on it:

A member of the congregation at Grand Rapids egisters objection against brother Haan, who refused to submit himself to a re-election, but [was determined] simply to continue to serve, and that member had objection to recognizing brother Haan as elder. The President asks if the largest part of the congregation has this objection. It appeared [to be the objection] of more persons, the aggrieved persons maintain that they raise this objection on good grounds, according to the church order, which says, "must retire." The President [that is, fo the Classis — Rev. K. Vanden Bosch — Ed.] maintains that in this the Consistory of Grand Rapids has acted in accordance with the profit of the church. The judgment of the Classis is requested, if by letting brother Haan remain as elder [the consistory] has acted against the Word of God and the Church Order. There was read Art. [the designation is missing, but Art. 27 of the Dordt Church Order is intended — Ed.] the words "must retire unless the profit of the congregation required otherwise." The aggrieved persons offer evidence that the consistory did not give sufficient thought to the matter, but that they [that is, the aggrieved — Ed.] saw no profit in it, and that the spirit of the Church Order is different. After having spoken about this matter over and again, it was by general consent judged (since the consistory declared to have acted according to the profit of the church), that this action was neither against God's Word nor against the Church Order. Since the aggrieved still hold to their objection, brother Haan gave an account of his *not* submitting to a re-election, namely, an evil endeavor of a part of the congregation to get brother Haan out. The Consistory also gave an account of what profit they had seen in it — not being able to let brother Haan go, [since they were] seeking the best gifts.[1] With this the objections subsided somewhat.

This action by Classis did not resolve the difficulty in the Grand Rapids congregation, however. So many objections were raised in the congregation that it was considered necessary to call a special session of Classis to deal with the matter. The special Classis was held on April 5, 1861, and a whole day — with morning, afternoon, and evening sessions — was spent on this matter.

The heading of the minutes of this assembly indicate that the meeting was called because of objections that arose out of the congregation against the fact that the consistory allowed brother Haan, whose term expired January 1, 1861, to continue in his office for a year without a re-election.

The following protest, addressed to the Grand Rapids consistory, and signed by thirty-one members of that congregation, was read to Classis:

To the honored Consistory of the True Reformed Church at Grand Rapids.

Beloved brothers in the Lord!

We, undersigned, not convinced that it is profitable for the congregation that brother G. de Haan should remain in his office in this manner, kindly

1. See below, however, for another account of the motivation of the Grand Rapids consistory.

request that your honorable body rescind your decisions with reference to that matter, since we certainly may not compare either the consistory or a member of it with the cruel mother who stood before Solomon and said: "Cut the child in two," although the true mother surrendered it. Therefore we desire that brother de Haan should be presented to the congregation [on a nomination] with another person in order that one of the two be chosen, and thus to see what the will of the Lord might be; because the will of man shall not prevail; but the Lord's counsel shall stand. Let us therefore be active in working together so that no schism may come and God's Church thus be laid waste. That you may receive this request in love is our hearty desire.

It was decided by the assembly that this protest was legally before the assembly, but the manner in which protest was registered was disapproved. It was judged that the manner of protesting was sinful, although there is no indication as to what the sinfulness of the protest consisted in. None the less, the protest was taken up for consideration.

Meanwhile, elder J. Gelok, a member of the consistory of Grand Rapids, asked for opportunity to tell the story of what had taken place. The following summary of his account appears in the minutes of this Classis, Art. 6:

He [that is, J. Gelok — Ed.] says that the manner in which brother Haan is in his office, has happened without nomination and thus without re-election. The Consistory, gathered in order to make a nomination, also asked brother Haan to be one of the nominees for elder, which he absolutely refused, saying that he did not want to be nominated and at the same time made it clearly known that he did not choose any longer to serve in office as elder.[2] Neither would brother Haan help in the least with the making of a nomination. After we had spoken about some matters, in order to place persons on the nomination, but not being able to come to a desired agreement, brother Haan was again asked, but to no avail. He said, choose as you please, you have the whole congregation before you, if only I don't have to protest. After this, having come together again with reference to the nomination of brother Haan, it was decided to retain brother Haan in the office of elder for a year, and not release him.

About this much was said one way and another [that is, by the Classis — Ed.]. J. Gelok and H. Moerman [both elders of Grand Rapids — Ed.] acknowledge that they sinned in not letting brother Haan go, since they foresaw that it would be unprofitable [for the congregation — Ed.] though they had tried to obscure this fact even by an Article [in the Church Order]. Much was said about whether or not J. Gelok and H. Moerman sho confess their sin. The matter appears very diffi for the assembly to deal with.

Subsequently the deacons of the Grand Rapids co tory, B. de Graaf and A. Pleune, acknowledge that in taining brother G. Haan in office they had acted trary to their will. It was decided that both elders deacons should be reproved by being admonished aga such insincere actions and exhorted to guard against t hereafter.

Various attempts were made to arrive at a solu It was proposed that brother Haan should not lon function as Reader in public worship on Sunday, Haan said he could not consent to that. The Consis was asked if they could continue with Haan if t were agreement about the matter. The Consistory Yes, but there was much disturbance and evidence dissatisfaction. (The Classis meeting was held in Grand Rapids Church, and it appears that members the congregation were present and made their se ments and feeling known.) Having come to an impa the President asked one of the elders to pray for g ance. That having been done, the President, Rev. Van Bosch, suggested that lots be drawn to see whether Consistory should be completely dissolved or not. was rejected. Thereupon the protesting members w asked if they would withdraw their protest. They t a vote among themselves and answered: No.

Once again the President asked the assembly what t might think about dissolving the Consistory. The C sistory declared itself agreeable. And the assembly cided upon so doing, since this seemed to be the way to resolve the difficulty in the Grand Rapids gregation.

Later in the session the Classis made a nomina for elders and deacons, from which the Grand Ra congregation was to make its choice at a designated ti The name of G. Haan appeared on the nomination elder. There is no record of the congregational mee for this election. Whether Haan was not elected, whether he simply chose not to be available for serv is not known. Fact is, however, that he was not su quently a member of the Grand Rapids Consistory.

Haan gave public spread to his difficulties with Consistory and congregation of Grand Rapids, as appe from the following public notice which he placed i weekly paper, *De Stoompost*:

Taking note of the fact that a member of congregation, who presumes to clothe an off makes himself busy with slandering me m shamefully, as, among others [by saying] that wh at New Year the Consistory was to be chang obection was registered by me against every per who was proposed for Elder or Deacon:

This is to serve notice to all that no object was advanced by me against anyone, and I prom by this to give $10 for the poor if any one be named against whom anything was brought by me.

Grand Rapids, July 25, 1861, G. Haan.

After the lapse of some months, it was noted t brother Gijsbert Haan had returned to the Dutch formed Church. He remained a member of it until J uary 1869, when, after having been solicited by the C sistory of the Grand Rapids Church, he returned to membership of that church. (Cf. the historical acco by Jacob De Jager in the *Centennial* book of the F Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michig page 13.) After this return to the church he once l Gijsbert Haan, in 1871 wrote his *Stem Eens Belastero* translation of which appeared in earlier issues of *Reformed Journal.*

2. It is meant, apparently, that Haan would not serve as elder if he were placed on nomination for re-election. He did, in fact, continue to serve as elder when continued in office by the consistory, and was a member of this very Classis which sat in judgment on his case.

etters . . .

:

have eagerly awaited Dr. G. Stob's article on the labor problem since are right in the midst of this strug- in our local church. But this arti- entitled, "The Burden of the Labor- Man" has disappointed me and ly disturbs me. It has disappoint- me because the laboring man has n left without any directive of any l, and it disturbs me because I be- e this writing is filled with danger- un-Reformed thinking. The whole cle seems to be based upon one or presupposition, namely, that the le is not perspicuous.

ssuming this presupposition, as we eve Dr. Stob has done, all the other uments and conclusions naturally fol- . For once we conclude that God's rd is not perspicuous we can un- tatingly state that "conscience and al choices are strictly individual," a minister cannot give counsel and dance to the laboring man because "live(s) far away from the actual blem of the laboring men," that efore a synod "which is made up dominantly of ministers and laymen o have little experience with or re- onship to the actual labor problem" not legislate or make binding pro- ncements, that therefore we need erts who are "Calvin College and inary professors, and other experts social and economic problems" ese are evidently closer to the la- ing man's problems than his own tor), and also that a union based on iversal principles of justice which, ause of the Christian influence and lition, may be said to be dominant Western society" is a possible way . We can then also understand Dr. b when he states that "after counsel l guidance is given, the Christian mmunity has, certainly in problemat- l instances, done its full duty — and member of the community must be to decision before the face of his rd." . . .

Once we concede that God's Word is perspicuous we have cut our life, h individual and ecclesiastical, free m the only possible anchor, to drift the uncertain directions of a sin- rkened human mind. If God's Word, ich alone is authoritative, cannot di- t us clearly, then naturally we are our own and no one can tell us how or what we may or may not do. Then it also naturally follows that a minister cannot be a pastor who comes with counsel and guidance on the basis of God's Word, and then naturally a synod becomes a "conscience-forming" agency and never a "conscience-binding" body. But then we are also conceding that the Reformed Church is right and our own Christian Reformed Church dead wrong, since we should leave the individual conscience free.

Concerning present-day labor organizations, they are all, by their own confession, a combined movement based on "universal principles of justice" seeking the welfare of the under-dog, the laboring man. They feel that the goal towards which they are moving justifies their use of coercion. Both the "closed shop" or "union shop" are such coercive measures. The unions (we are speaking of the so-called neutral unions) are therefore definitely anti-Christian in that they destroy our liberty. They not only destroy our liberty as laborers but also as Christians, since they also bind the conscience. It is clear that no Christian can possibly be a member of the neutral unions. . . .

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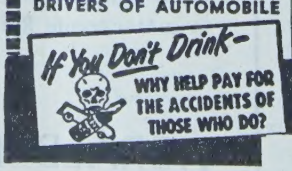

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